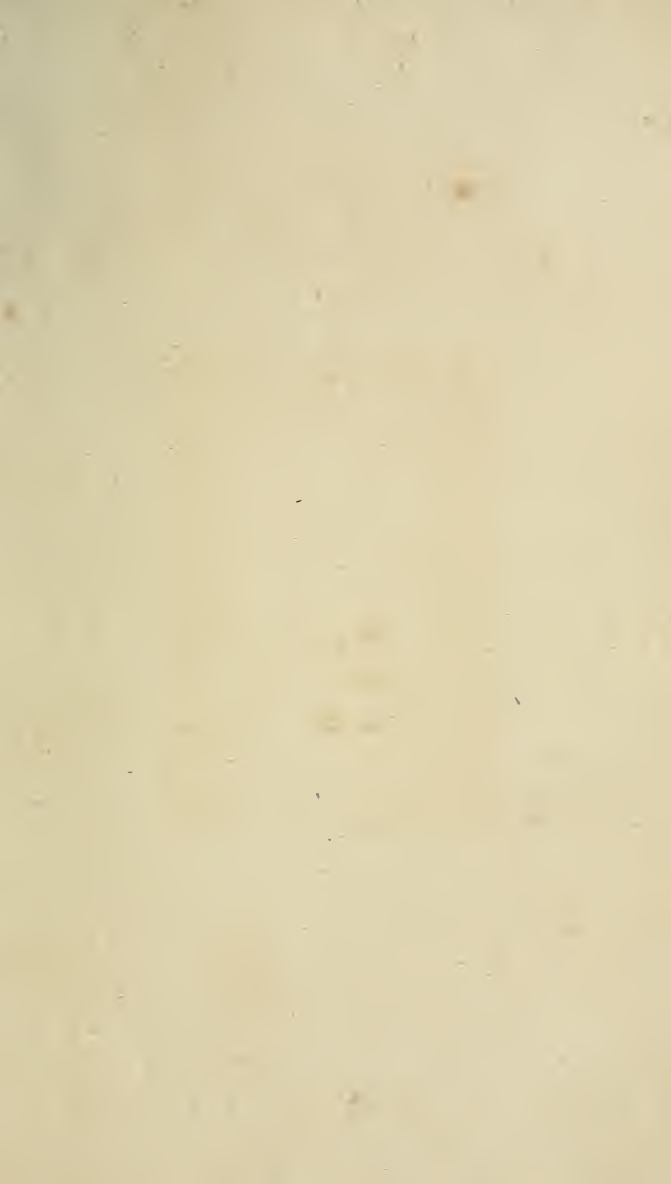


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M.D.

MATILDA MONTFORT;

A

ROMANTIC NOVEL.

IN

FOUR VOLUMES.

BY

PETER PEREGRINE, Esq.



VOL. III.

..... Lend thy serious hearing

To what I shall unfold.

SHAKESPEAR.

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1809.

MATILDA MONTFORT.

CHAPTER I.

For aught that ever I could read,
Could ever hear by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth.

SHAKESPEAR.

THE sun was majestically rising o'er the Grecian land, his resplendent rays, playing with sparkling beauty on the crispy surface of the translucent main, when the boatswain's shrill pipe called

all hands, to work out of the harbour, the vessel the Countess and her party had embarked on board. They weighed the ponderous anchor; they displayed to the air the spreading canvas, setting all sail; the helmsman at the tiller took his station, whilst the anxious master whistled for a wind.

A BREEZE from the South East sprang up, and cleared the ship of the Sicilian shore. Her sails were filled; the streaming pendant floated in the air; her prow cut through the opening waves, and she sailed with stately pomp before the swelling gale. The wind being fair, she soon passed the Corsican and Sardinian isles, and arrived, in due time, in safety at their destined port.

It being evening when they landed,

they stopped at Marseilles, till the next morning; when they engaged a commodious barge, and sailed up the proudly flowing stream of the rapid Rhone. The day was fine, the sun shining with refulgent brightness from his meridian height, darting his rays upon the various hues of the craggy banks. Now, upon the russet brow of the torpid rock, whose base hung beetling o'er the watry bed; now, upon the autumnal foliage of the branching trees, of different tints; and upon the variegated bosom of the many-coloured turf, dotted by nature in a sportive mood, with flowerets gay, and verdant grass: then, ranging along the rippling current of the midway tide, gilding with splendour whate'er he deigned to touch.

It was the intention of the Countess

to sail up the river, till they came to Viviers, where she would stop with Madame Lunelle, till she sent to Villeroy castle, for her carriage, the distance being but short.

THE boat cut rapidly through the yielding flood ; at length the lofty turrets of the castle, raising their proud heads, appeared among the forest trees, the gilded vanes glittering in the declining beams of the setting sun. They now approached near to the end of their voyage ; the rocks on each side rose rudely majestic, among which Matilda recollected several, that Elinor and she had often wandered o'er, admiring the beauties of nature ; or, where they had enjoyed a shady seat beneath the jetting brow of one, more screened than the rest, from the scorching heat of the mid-

day sun, viewing the many barges passing on the river's chrystal bosom, with streamers flying, and the hardy barge-men, with lusty sinews, tugging at the oars, which, as if by clock-work moved, were together raised, and together fell, beating one stroke upon the buoyant wave.

THEY landed at the quay, and repaired to the hotel of Madame Lunelle, whom they found at home, and with her, just arrived, the Chevalier and Madame Melun. They were rejoiced, and at the same time surprised, to see Matilda with the Countess, whose mysterious and sudden disappearance, had filled them with sorrow, and with sadness.

SHE was now informed, that when

night had spread her sable veil, and neither she, or the servant who had attended her, returned to the *château*, they thought Madame Evereux had prevailed upon her to stop at the cottage till the next morning, and they did not feel any anxious uneasiness. But, when the next day passed over, and she did not make her appearance, they began to be under the greatest alarm. They recollected the rude attack, that had been made on her at the *fête*, given by Baron Longuaville; and feared that her absence was nearly connected with that event.

WHEN Chatillon went up the next morning, to Madame Evereux, and found that she had left the cottage, as usual, in the evening, they were confirmed in their suspicions, and bewailed her loss,

without being able to form a judgment, by which they might be directed in their endeavours to obtain any information, that would lead to a discovery of the place of her forced retreat.

MADAME Evereux was more affected, if possible, than the inhabitants of the *chateau*. She appeared distracted, wandering about the mountain's rugged side, calling on Matilda, and searching every well-known spot, where they had so lately enjoyed the delight of each other's valued converse. She roved through the bowery groves of myrtles and of oranges; o'er the velvet sod of the grassy plain, and the russet brow of the craggy rock; but no Matilda answered to her anxious voice, and she gave her up as for ever lost. It had such an effect upon her frame, that a

severe and dangerous fit of sickness was the consequence, from which she had but just recovered, when the Chevalier and his party left the *chateau*.

COUNT ST. CLAUDE believed, that Matilda had made an elopement with a favoured lover, of the lower ranks of society; which, the Marquis de Pontoise had informed him, was the case, and he had since been married to the lady his father had fixed upon for him.

AT Madame Lunelle's, Dumain and Chatillon met, and renewed their former intimacy and friendship, which had commenced some time before, at Montpellier.

DUMAIN accompanied the Countess and Matilda to Villeroy Castle, where

he stopped some time, before he could bring himself to the resolution of bidding an adieu to the latter. The time drew near, however, at which this reluctant farewell must be taken. He felt the impropriety of prolonging his stay, which only served to add strength to a passion, that had already taken such deep hold in his heart, that all his efforts would not be able to dislodge it. He made resolution after resolution to take his departure, but still as he made, he broke them.

TIME imperceptibly slipped on, in the fascinating enjoyment of the presence and the converse of his love; which had its alloy, however, in the recollection that imperious circumstances had rendered it impossible that his passion could ever be consummated.

In the midst of their sweet discourse, that flowed like honey from their lips, he would sometimes pause, and would stand, gazing with rapture on her heavenly form, when a deep and heavy sigh would involuntarily break from his loaded breast, which in vain he tried to suppress.

“ OH, Matilda!” he one day said, as they were walking in the wood, “ my
“ heart is ready to burst the narrow
“ bounds in which it is confined, when
“ I think that I must, ere long, bid a
“ final farewell to that adored object,
“ on which my soul with ardour dotes;
“ the only one for which I wish to live;
“ and, yet, am by cruel and command-
“ ing destiny, denied the consoling
“ thought, that time may be my friend,
“ and, one day, allow me to call you

“ mine. Oh, Heaven! I am denied
 “ the privileg even of balmy hope,
 “ the greatest solace to a mind op-
 “ pressed!”

THEY had reached the margin of the transparent lake, along whose flowery banks they roved, till they came to the path that led through the wood to the sequestered bowery glen, in which stood the banqueting house, Matilda's favourite retreat.

“ DURING your residence at the cas-
 “ tle,” continued Dumain, “ will you,
 “ Matilda, in your quiet and peaceful
 “ hours, in this umbrageous dale, think
 “ sometimes on Dumain, the miserable,
 “ the wretched, unhappy Dumain?
 “ who, in an accursed moment, bar-

“tered happiness for misery, and de-
“barred himself the power of ever re-
“gaining his former peace of mind.”

“You know, Dumain,” said she,
“that I have before expressed a friend-
“ship for you, and my tongue is not
“used to utter what my heart would
“refuse to sanction. That friendship
“still exists, nor is it, from the merit of
“its object, likely to be diminished.
“I shall, therefore, often think of you,
“and think of you with the pleasure
“that cannot fail to attend the contem-
“plation of the many peaceful, happy
“hours we have spent, in the ever va-
“lued presence of my dearest father, in
“our cottage in the vale Le Pui.”

DUMAIN appeared transported; he

caught hold of her lily hand, which he pressed to his lips, with an ardour that shewed the feelings of his heart.

At length, he said, with emotion,
 “ Oh, angelic goodness! Bright excel-
 “ lence!—Oh! unhappy Dumain, that
 “ can only at a distance view it!—
 “ When I am engaged in the embattled
 “ host, by death surrounded on every
 “ side, the thought of my charming
 “ angel’s condescension to her unhappy
 “ friend, will add strength to my up-
 “ lifted arm, which shall revenge my
 “ wayward fate with fury on my
 “ country’s foes. Yes, the thought
 “ of my Matilda will be a tower of
 “ strength that shall hurl death amongst
 “ their ranks, by this well-executing
 “ arm.”

“ WHAT mean you, Dumain?” said Matilda.

“ WHEN I bid you adieu,” said he,—
 “ Oh, Heaven! perhaps for ever—for
 “ ever did I say?—Can I bear the idea?
 “ Oh, Matilda! pity my distraction; ex-
 “ cuse my vehemence;—when I think
 “ of parting, I am not myself.”

“ I hope and trust we shall meet
 “ again,” said she, “ shall meet in hap-
 “ piness and peace, and again with
 “ innocence and pleasure, enjoy as
 “ many delightful hours in the cottage
 “ of the vale, as we have before expe-
 “ rienced in that sweet retirement.”

“ I hope we shall,” said Dumain,
 with a heavy sigh.

“ I feel a confidence we shall. But,
“ what said you of the wars, Du-
“ main?”

“ When I bid you adieu,” he said,
“ it is my intention to go to the seat of
“ war, in Flanders; and, to amuse my
“ perturbed mind, to enlist a volunteer
“ against our country’s enemies. An
“ inactive life will be a burthen to me,
“ not to be supported.”

“ Do you consider the danger that
“ you will have to encounter, Dumain?
“ Do you think of the hardships of a
“ soldier’s life? Oh! think of the many
“ shapes in which death presents itself,
“ in the embattled field. Methinks, I
“ hear the cannon roar. Methinks, I
“ see the earth with dead bodies strew-
“ ed; the rivers running blood; and

“ mangled limbs flying in the air, into
 “ which they are hurled by the deadly
 “ powder’s force, springing from the
 “ unseen, secret mine! Oh! give up
 “ the idea, Dumain; run not into dan-
 “ ger’s mouth. Seek not destruction.
 “ Seek not death; it is enough to meet
 “ it like a Christian and a man, when it
 “ uncalled for comes.”

“ Oh, Heaven! can the life of the
 “ miserable Dumain be an object of so
 “ much interest in that tender heart?
 “ Yes, it is.—Matilda has declared it;
 “ and Matilda’s wish is sacred to Du-
 “ main. Though I had resolved to
 “ visit the army, and enlist myself
 “ among the opposers of our foes;
 “ though I had formed to myself ideas
 “ of honour, gained there, of victory
 “ and of glory, I give up all; all I

“ with pleasure do renounce, because
“ my Matilda has deigned to express
“ a wish to that effect.”

THEY had, some time before, left the bower in which they had been seated, and directed their steps up the avenue that led to the castle; they had now arrived at the hall door, which prevented a continuance of their conversation.

CHAPTER II.

.... Banished I am, if but from thee:

.....

.....

Yet now farewell; and farewell life with thee.

SHAKESPEAR.

THE dejection of spirits under which Dumain laboured, grew upon him daily; which not all the variety of company, that visited at the castle, was able to dissipate. Indeed, it served rather to add to, than diminish the sufferings

of his mind, as it shewed Matilda, and her many excellent endowments, in a new light to his admiring eyes. He saw her as much the praise and the delight of the gay and fashionable visitors at Villeroy castle, as she had been the wonder and the admiration of those in the more humble, and more confined sphere in which he had been accustomed to see her move. Whether she touched the chords of her lute, and to the sweet music she brought from it added her vocal powers; joined in the fantastic mazy dance; or took a part in conversation, gay or serious, he was sure to hear sounded her praise: praise, he could for ever sit, and with extatic pleasure hear; but which, afterwards, only served to make him more sad, by the thoughts of the impediments that

existed in the accomplishment of his wishes.

HE found, more and more every day, the absolute necessity there was for him, at all events, to tear himself from her presence. He mentioned his intention of leaving Villeroy Castle to the Countess, who declared, that she should part with him with reluctance. However, as he seemed determined, she did not press him against what she thought his inclination, and suffered him to name an early day for his departure.

IN the mean while, she proposed, that they should pay a visit to their friends at Viviers; that Dumain might bid a farewell, not only to Chatillon, but to Melun, and the whole family,

with whom he had become a great favourite. The Countess, accordingly, sent to Madame Lunelle, to inform her that she, Matilda, and Dumain, would wait upon her on a day she fixed, if it was perfectly convenient and agreeable to her. Madame returned for answer, that nothing could give her more sincere pleasure, than their proposed visit; but, that she hoped they would not confine it to a single day, but extend it as long as they could, with pleasure and convenience to themselves.

AT the time that the Countess had mentioned to Madame Lunelle, they made their intended visit, which they prolonged to two days. They were received by the Chevalier and Madame Melun, as well as by their mother, with every token of sincere regard and

esteem, particularly Matilda, by her old friend Elinor. They called to mind the many pleasant days they had passed together, in rambling o'er the craggy banks of the river; and paid a visit to many favourite parts, where they had roamed, to enjoy the cooling evening breeze, after the heat of the scorching noon-day sun; and where, in the heat of that sun, in his meridian glory shining, they had sat beneath the overhanging brow of a projecting rock, shaded from his burning influence.

THEY were attended in their walks by Melun and Dumain, and frequently joined by Chatillon. As Elinor was pointing out the walk among the rudely majestic rocks to Matilda, where she had suffered such agitation, by the sound of the German flute, from Cha-

tillon playing an air she had before been so well acquainted with, as being one composed by Dumain, she was overheard by the Chevalier.

“DON’T you be too severe upon Matilda,” said he. “If those rocks could speak, Elinor, they might betray more love secrets than one.”

“FY! Melun,” said she. Then, addressing herself to the party, gaily said, “It was among those rocks, when we were walking, on the very evening that I mention we heard Chatillon play upon the flute, that Melun, with downcast eyes and modest look; with hesitation in his speech and awkwardness in his whole manner, opened his heart, and shewed it to me, with wounds of love deeply inflicted,

“ he said, by my piercing eyes. ’Twas
 “ on that evening, among those rocks,
 “ that he told me—nay and he swore it
 “ too, by every lover’s oath he could
 “ think of, or I would not have believ-
 “ ed him—that on me depended his
 “ happiness or misery; his life or death
 “ hung upon my tongue. So, that I
 “ might not have the misery of a hu-
 “ man being to blame myself for, or his
 “ death to answer for, I took pity on
 “ him,—I promised, out of mere cha-
 “ rity, that I would relieve him from
 “ his fear of misery, or his apprehension
 “ of death.”

“ ’TWAS on that evening,” said the
 Chevalier, “ that Melun poured his lays
 “ of love in her longing and expecting
 “ ear. ’Twas among those rocks, that
 “ the fond whisper, softly reverberating

“ from cliff to cliff, was by her received
 “ with reiterated force, and she owned
 “ me sole arbiter of her future fate.
 “ ’Twas on that evening, and among
 “ those rocks, the moon, shining with
 “ silver brightness, tipping with pale
 “ lustre each craggy top, and the en-
 “ chanting philomela lending her tune-
 “ ful aid, that the tender heart of Eli-
 “ nor, susceptible to every delicate
 “ passion, and attuned to love, felt a
 “ pleasing flutter, that led her to give
 “ way to her chaste desire, and to own,
 “ that I had long been lord and master
 “ of her affections.”

“ It was pity and compassion,” said
 she, “ mingled with fear, that I should
 “ have the life of a fellow creature to
 “ answer for, that led me to act that
 “ foolish part. However,” she added,

looking slyly at him, “ I believe,—I believe, if the time was to come again, —I believe,—I should again be simple enough to repeat it.”

MELUN answered her by catching hold of her hand, which he pressed with eagerness to his lips. Dumain saw their happiness, and sighed. It was not a sigh of malevolent envy,—It was the offspring of a thought of his own wretchedness.

“ OH !” he exclaimed to himself, “ what bliss attends the happy nuptial state! What joy on earth can be greater, than to love and be beloved, in those delightful pleasing bands; which, when attended with delicacy and harmony, and where the hands united are accompanied with hearts

“ of tender susceptibility, may be by
 “ angels envied ! O happy Melun !
 “ Blessed in the happiest state that this
 “ sublunary world can afford ; crowned
 “ with a wife, whose delicately tender
 “ heart beats in unison with your own !
 “ Miserable Dumain ! denied the bliss
 “ he sees enjoyed by others ; and yet,
 “ the angelic object by which it may
 “ be attained, before his longing eyes,
 “ and within his apparent grasp !——
 “ Wretched being that I am, I have
 “ before me my haven of earthly bliss,
 “ and am, yet, denied to shelter there !”

DUMAIN was in this melancholy train
 of thought, when his attention was sud-
 denly arrested, by observing a more than
 common agitation in the appearance of
 Matilda. It arose from her seeing a

stranger, at some distance before them, who, when she turned her eyes towards the spot where he was, suddenly disappeared behind the base of a jetting rock, which led into another walk. It was true, that she had but an imperfect view of him, but imperfect as it was, it was sufficient to convince her that it was Baron Longuaville, in whose person, she thought, she could not be mistaken. She told Elinor her suspicions, who immediately proposed, that they should return home.

THE next morning, the Countess left Viviers, accompanied by Matilda and Dumain; the latter of whom bid an affectionate farewell to Madame Lunelle and her party; and, as they were going to the castle, told the Countess that it

was his intention, with her permission, to take his leave of her hospitable mansion the next day.

MATILDA rose early in the morning, and had walked to the grove at the bottom of one of the avenues, where she was seated in a musing posture, with her head leaning upon her hand, buried in thought. Dumain stood before her some time before she saw him. A deep sigh broke from her bosom, and at the same time, lifting up her eyes, he was the first object she cast them on. A crimson blush suffused her lovely cheek, and she rose from her seat much agitated.

“ I FEAR you are not well, Matilda !” said Dumain.

“ I WAS a little alarmed, at so unexpected-
 “ ly seeing any one near me,
 “ when I thought I had been alone.”

“ I CAME, purposely, to seek you,”
 said he, “ hearing that you had walked
 “ down to this grove. I come, Matilda,
 “ once more, to bid you adieu, before
 “ I leave you, perhaps, for ever.
 “ For ever! Can I think of parting for
 “ ever, without distraction ensuing?
 “ Can I think of the happiness that I
 “ have enjoyed, and go into wretched
 “ exile with a calm mind? Impossible,
 “ Oh, impossible!——Miserable, unhappy
 “ Dumain!——But, I must go—
 “ I must tear myself from the angelic,
 “ but forbidden object of my soul’s
 “ adoration.——When I am gone, may
 “ I hope Matilda will sometimes cast

“ away a thought on her wretched
 “ friend?—Yes, that name I may
 “ enjoy. My charming angel has con-
 “ descended to acknowledge she feels
 “ a friendship for me; and not imperi-
 “ ous fate itself, nor all the power of
 “ the extensive universe shall wrest
 “ that title from me.—Did you not,
 “ lovely Matilda, confess a friendship
 “ for me?”

“ I DID, Dumain,” said she; “ I do
 “ now confess a sincere and unalterable
 “ friendship for you. Where’er you
 “ go, or in what situation soe’er you
 “ may be, that friendship shall follow
 “ you still.”

“ O, WHAT angelic goodness! How
 “ shall I merit such condescension?—

“ But,—I must,—I must go—. Once
“ more, Matilda,—once more,—fare-
“ well.”

SAYING which, he took her hand, which he pressed in rapture to his lips. He stood for some seconds, unable to move; at length, he again said, with a heavy sigh, “ Farewell,” and walked in sorrow to his horse, which had been some time waiting for him, he having taken leave of the Countess the night before. After he had mounted, he bid her another adieu, by waving his hat, which caught her eye, just as she was entering the hall door of the castle.

AT breakfast, both the Countess and Matilda were silent. The former missed Dumain’s conversation, and the

thoughts of the latter were wholly employed upon him.

THE Countess, breaking silence first, said, “ I never met with a young man
“ of more extensive knowledge, or of
“ a more excellent disposition, than
“ Dumain. He is brave, as my obligations to him will always cause me
“ to acknowledge. He is uncommon-
“ ly handsome in his person ; his manners are most interesting ; and his accomplishments, taken in the whole,
“ very far above most in the highest
“ elevation of life.”

MATILDA enjoyed his praise ; but she felt that she was too much interested in it, to take a part in the conversation upon that subject, and she felt much agitated and confused.

SHE was relieved from her embarrassment, by the entrance of a servant with letters for her. She hastily broke the seals, and found they were from her father, who, in his way from Paris, had called at Villeroy Castle; and, finding that his daughter had gone with the Chevalier and Madame Melun to a distant part of Gascony, had proceeded to the vale, from whence he sent Jaques to the *chateau* of the Chevalier, in Bigorre, to deliver the letters he had for her. Finding that she had suddenly disappeared from thence, some time before, and that the Chevalier and family had returned to Viviers, Jaques followed them, and was told that she was then at Villeroy Castle, whither he of course proceeded.

THE purport of the letters was, to

desire that she would accompany the bearer of them home. She received the summons with secret joy; for, much as she had reason to respect the Countess, and much as she was attached to her, she felt a paramount affection, that beat high in her tender bosom, in favour of her ever dear and revered father. She prepared, with cheerfulness and alacrity, for her journey, which was fixed for the day but one after the arrival of Jaques.

CHAPTER III.

High transports are shewn to the sight,
But we are not to find them our own.

SIENSTONE.

THE next day, the Countess took Matilda, to bid a farewell to her friend Elinor, as well as to the Chevalier, and to Madame Lunelle. Chatillon, who was there, was much affected at parting, as were, indeed, the whole family; but none more than Elinor, who enter-

tained for her the most disinterested and the purest friendship.

UPON their return to the castle, she took a walk in the wood, and visited, for the last time, the well-known paths and avenues, she had before so often trod. She went along them, till she found herself upon the banks of the crystallake; leaving which, she traced the margin of the rippling streamlet, till it led her into the sequestered grove, where she had so lately parted with Dumain. Here, she lingered long; she sat down upon the same seat where he had found her, when he came to bid her farewell. The murmurs that arose from the wind, gently forcing itself through the rustling leaves of the bowery shrubs; its sound more distant, yet more loud, through the spreading branches of the lofty

plane, and the waving heads of the majestic cedar; the crispy rivulet creeping o'er its pebbly bottom, and the plaintive notes of the feathered tenants of the groves, caused in her mind a melancholy she could not shake off; and called afresh to her recollection every circumstance attending the happy hours she had with him passed: her bosom heaved with an involuntary sigh, which seemed to say, "Alas! when shall we meet again?"

THE next morning early, she bid an affectionate adieu to the Countess, and set off with Jaques; to the great grief of the inhabitants of the castle, by all of whom she was adored.

SHE would have left the Countess and her family with much greater reluc-

tance than she did, had it not been for the pleasing expectation of so soon meeting with her ever-dear father, whose society at their rural cottage she looked forward to the enjoyment of, with great delight. Her mind was full of joy at the idea of the approaching time, when she should again listen to his instructive voice; again soothe his disturbed breast, by many little acts of willing service; anticipating his wishes, and, if possible, preventing his wants: to again run over his favourite airs upon her lute, and draw from him pleasing smiles of approbation, at her efforts to amuse him.

THE journey seemed tedious to her impatient mind. She took no pleasure now in contemplating nature's beauties: the diversified appearance of the country she passed through, and the variety

of the objects that presented themselves, had to her a continued sameness. The different tints of the luxuriant herbage, spreading o'er the bosom of the variegated earth; the many hues of the pendent foliage, that enriched the tufted groves; the gay flowerets with the first intermixed, and the golden fruit, inviting to the eye, that among the latter grew, had no power to attract her notice, but appeared to her one unvaried scene, so intently fixed was her mind upon the happiness she so soon expected to enjoy, in the presence of her father.

At length, they reached the base of a grass-grown hill, which they ascended, and from its summit she discovered the distant vale Le Pui. After travelling on, for a short time, she saw the variegated foliage of the bowery hill behind

the cottage, and the meandering stream that glided in smooth currents down its flowery side. She now discovered, among the leaf-grown trees, the whited walls of the cottage itself. Her heart beat high with eager expectation, as she approached it.

SHE alighted from the *cabriolet*, in which she had travelled. With anxious joy, she lifted the latch of the garden gate, and ran to the house door, which was open; she entered, and went into the parlour, but was disappointed in not seeing her father there.

As she was going out again, she met Alice.

“ АН! Heaven be praised, that you
“ are come home again, Mademoiselle;

“ the cottage has not been like itself
“ since you went. Then, my master
“ has so moped, and has been so melancholy without you——”

“ Where is my father?” said Matilda, interrupting her.

“ HE was so melancholy without
“ you,” continued Alice, “ that before
“ he sent Jaques for you, he sat whole
“ days in the study, and would not
“ speak to any one.”

“ BUT, where is he now?” said she.

“ And, when he did speak, it was
“ only to answer a question, with yes,
“ or no, and then he would mope
“ again.”

“ Do, good Alice, answer my ques-
“ tion, instead of being so fond of hear-
“ ing yourself talk.”

“ MARRY come up! fond of hear-
“ ing myself talk, quotha? And so,
“ because I am glad to see you come
“ back again, I must be snubbed, and
“ told that I am fond of hearing myself
“ talk! I am sure, Mademoiselle, I
“ always am fond of hearing your voice,
“ when you sing so sweetly to the music
“ of your lute, though you don't like to
“ hear mine.”

“ How provoking!—Pray, good Alice,
“ don't distract me thus, but tell me
“ where my father is, that I may fly to
“ his arms.”

“ AH! my master, poor man! has
“ waited for you to come home with
“ such impatience, that for the last
“ week, ever since he has expected
“ Jaques and you back, he has gone up
“ the hill, to look for you, a hundred
“ times a day; aye, that he has, and
“ oftener too.”

“ Do, Alice, first tell me where I may
“ find my father, and I will afterwards
“ listen to you with pleasure.”

“ You are so hasty, Mademoiselle,
“ or I should have told you before. I
“ was saying, that he was so impatient
“ for you to arrive, that he was always
“ looking out for you. At last, he could
“ wait no longer, and he returned to
“ Paris yesterday morning.”

“ RETURNED to Paris !” said Matilda, sorrowfully.

“ YES, Mademoiselle,” replied Alice.
“ When he came from thence, he said
“ that he must return soon, but wished
“ to see you first; and sent Jaques off
“ for you immediately, and has been
“ expecting you ever since.”

“ How unfortunate !” said Matilda.
“ If Jaques had gone to Villeroy Castle,
“ before he went to Bigorre, I might
“ have been at home, to have seen my
“ father, and, perhaps, to have gone
“ with him !”

MATILDA’S disappointment was great, at this unlooked-for information. She anxiously hoped and expected, that the

presence of her father would have rendered the cottage of Le Pui a scene of pleasure and delight; instead of which, she now experienced melancholy and disquietude. She was uneasy in the house, and was soon tired with the music of her lute. She rambled o'er the hill, and visited each well-known spot, which had been the scene of former happiness and pleasure; the recollection of which, with the idea that they no longer were to be enjoyed, filled her mind with gloom and discontent.

ALL the pleasure she now enjoyed, which was to her, indeed, no mean one, was the superintendence of her little seminary of her poor neighbours' children; and the gratification was great,

when she found that their improvement kept pace with her expectations.

THE first time she went down the valley, she was met by the poor inhabitants who offered up their thanksgiving for her safe return amongst them, and poured out their homely, but hearty congratulations on her continued health. Among the rest that she saw, were the aged parents of little Jeanett; and she had the satisfaction to find, the assistance, that through her interference, had been rendered them by her father, had answered the purpose it was intended it should; and had, with the old man's industry, enabled them once more, to enjoy all the comforts of life, such as they aspired to, in their humble station.

THESE were pleasures, to a mind like

her's, of no trifling value, and they served to allay, in part, the gloom attending the solitary life she now led at the cottage; rendered more solitary, by the recollection of the happy, the cheerful hours, she before had spent there. The comparison would call to her remembrance, every little incident that had happened, almost from their first fixing their residence in the vale, in which Dumain bore no small share. An involuntary sigh would escape from her bosom, when she viewed the bush, on which her bull-finch perched, when he took his flight from off her finger; and the bank beneath, which gave way to the pressure of Dumain's feet, when he recovered the little fugitive, and brought it safely back to her. Or, when she looked at the shrub, which, whilst a tender plant, he had assisted her in tying to its sup-

port, mentally exclaiming, “ Happy,
“ happy hours!

THEN she would think of the mysterious perturbation of mind, her father had so long been a prey to; and would recollect the smiles of approbation, that would, in spite of it, beam from his countenance, at her endeavours to amuse him. This idea served to add to her melancholy; as she could not by her presence, pay those willing attentions, that her heart told her, he was in need of. The more she gave way to thought, the greater was her heaviness of mind.

CHAPTER IV.

A generous soul is not confin'd at home,
But spreads itself abroad o'er all the public;
And feels for ev'ry member of the land.

YOUNG.

As Matilda was one day sitting in the parlour, she observed a stranger ride up to the garden gate. He hung the bridle of his horse upon the stump of a decayed branch of an elm, and walked up to the cottage. Jaques, soon after,

brought letters to her, of which the stranger had been the bearer. They were from her father. He told her, that he well knew the melancholy time she must pass at the cottage, in his absence; and as it was uncertain, he said, how long, or how short a time, that absence might continue, he requested she would come to him to Paris.

SHE asked a thousand questions of the messenger, relative to her father's health, and the spirits that he appeared to be in; but, on those heads she could gain little information from him, as he said, he had never seen Monsieur Montfort, except at the time that he gave the letters to him to carry, it being by chance that he heard he was to pass through the vale, in his road to Nismes, where he

was going, to transact some business of importance.

MATILDA gave directions to Jaques, to be ready to set off the next morning. In the mean time, Alice assisted her to pack up some things, necessary for her journey, which employ edthem, till bedtime, when they retired to rest.

MATILDA waked before the dawn of day had begun to draw the curtains of sable night, and, as soon as the grey-ey'd morn, peeped through the eastern sky, she left the cottage of Le Pui, attended by Jaques. They travelled quickly through the vale, and after crossing a craggy barren hill, of towering height, they were in the Paris high road.

HER heart was light, and beat with quick pulsation, at the joyful expectation of soon being clasped in her dear father's arms. At length, the lofty spires of the capital, could be at a distance seen. They drew near it. The busy hum of the bustling crowd, filled their ears, as they passed the barriers of the city.

THEY had scarcely entered, when, either by the unskilfulness of the charioteer, or the obstinacy of a coachman passing them, the wheels of the carriages were entangled, and the *cabriolet* in which Matilda was, being the lightest of the two, was overturned by the collision. She was thrown out, and though much frightened, was, fortunately, very little hurt. She was taken into the shop of a *pâtissier*, opposite to the place where the accident happened,

whilst Jaques was employed in setting the carriage to rights, in the best manner he was able.

It was some time before the crowd, assembled in consequence of the accident, dispersed: when the street was cleared, Matilda was surprised, that she could not see any thing of either Jaques or the carriage. At first, she thought, that he might possibly have taken it to have some necessary repairs done to it, before it could proceed farther, and that he would soon return with it, to take her to the part of the city where her father lodged; but hour passed on after hour, and he did not make his appearance. She was in the greatest dilemma not knowing what course to pursue: she had, unfortunately, put her father's letter into her portmanteau, before

she left the cottage, which had remained in the carriage, and she did not recollect from what part of Paris it was dated. Night came on, and she was obliged to take up her lodging at the *pâtissier's*.

SHE went out the next morning, with an intention of calling at the house they had occupied apartments in, previous to their residence in the vale Le Pui. After much difficulty, for she knew very little of Paris, she succeeded in finding it, but could not obtain any information of her father, who had not been there since she was with him.

As she was returning from thence, she passed through the *Boulevards*, and was alarmed, by observing a stranger closely following her; whichever way

she went, he was at her heels, till, as she was turning down one of the walks, towards the city, darkness then fast approaching, he rudely seized her, and forcibly conveyed her into a *fiacre*, which was standing at the corner of a street: he clapped to the door, and disappeared. She found now that she was in the power of a person, who apparently had been waiting for her; and, as soon as he spoke, she, to her great distress, recognised the voice of Baron Longuaville.

THE *fiacre* stopped; when he said,
 “ I took great pains, Matilda, to win
 “ your love, when at Villeroy Castle,
 “ but you always treated me with dis-
 “ dain; you now are in my power, and
 “ it will be my fault if I let the oppor-
 “ tunity slip.”

UPON which, he took her, more dead than alive, by force, out of the *fiacre*, and carried her in his arms into a mean looking house. She was shewn into a room, in which was sitting a tawdry-dressed young woman alone, who, upon seeing Matilda full of trouble and distress, began of praising the generosity, and the kindness of Longuaville; and described, in warm and glowing colours, the gay and happy life the votaries of pleasure led.

SOON after, a strange man entered the parlour; he started when he saw her; she looked at him, and thought she had some recollection of him.

LONGUAVILLE going out of the room for a few minutes, the young woman having previously left it, the stranger

said, " You may remember Filesac,
" whose life you saved on the side of
" the Pyrenees. This is no time for
" many words. I am he; and I will
" shew you that I have gratitude in my
" heart, by delivering you from the
" brutal lust of Longuaville: follow
" me without delay."

So saying, he opened the door, and they walked out of the room. In the lobby, they met Longuaville returning. Rage flashed through his eyes, at the sight of Filesac leading Matilda out, and he drew his sword. Filesac drew also, and opening the street door, kept the Baron at bay, till she had got out, desiring her to make the most speed she could, to a distant part of the city, out of her persecutor's reach. Longuaville would have followed her, but

was prevented by the other, who had, in their scuffle, disarmed him.

AFTER wandering about for some time, she found her way to her lodgings, at the *pâtissier's*; but was disappointed on being informed that Jaques had not called. She went out again the next morning, in hopes of meeting with either him or her father, but did not go any great distance from her lodging, thinking it probable, that the former would seek her near the place where they parted.

As she was one day walking, she was accosted by an elderly, matronly looking woman, by her name. She started, fearing that she had been discovered by Longuaville; but was soon undeceived, by finding that the person who spoke to

her, was a woman whose husband her father had once released from a jail, by paying for him a small sum, that an iron-hearted creditor had confined him for; rescuing, by that act of charity, a whole family from perishing through want, and enabling the father, by again following his trade, to support them; which he would have been precluded from the possibility of, if he had continued to have been shut up in a prison.

“ I am bound, Mademoiselle,” said she, “ to pray for your excellent father, “ the longest day I live; so are all my “ family, for he was the salvation of “ us all. But for him, my husband “ must have lingered out his life in “ hopeless confinement, and his poor “ family have suffered all the miseries “ of cheerless need.”

“ My father,” said Matilda, “ I am
“ sure, was amply repaid for what little
“ he did, for your husband, in seeing
“ the happiness that he was the cause
“ of.”

“ You are worthy of being the daugh-
“ ter of such a father,” said the other,
“ and such another man, I think, there
“ can scarcely live. He was not con-
“ tent with freeing my husband from a
“ jail; but knowing, that without some
“ money to set him up again in his
“ ruined trade, he was doing charity
“ only by halves, he advanced him a
“ sum equal to his wants; and we now,
“ thank the blessed God! can afford to
“ live better than ever we could. How
“ many men are relieved from their
“ irksome imprisonment by some cha-

“ ritable hand, and for want of a little
 “ further aid, to encourage their wil-
 “ ling efforts, are doomed to lead a
 “ life of wretched poverty; to bear the
 “ scorn and contumely of wealth and
 “ ease; unfeeling, and remorseless!—
 “ Not so your father, he can feel for
 “ others woes, and feeling, can relieve
 “ them.”

“ You set too high a value on the
 “ little my father did for you. I am
 “ sure, he looked not for praise, being
 “ sensible he was doing no more than
 “ charity demanded from him.”

“ So he says himself,” said the wo-
 man, “ and, disdaining praise, when it
 “ is so justly due, enhances still the ob-
 “ ligation. He says, he feels as much

“ happiness in the contemplation of the
 “ good he has rendered us, as we do in
 “ the enjoyment of it; and he will
 “ not take back even the sum he lent
 “ us. It was but yesterday that I took
 “ the money in a purse, for we can well
 “ afford to return it now, and offered it
 “ to him——”

“ OFFERED it to whom?—To my
 “ father?—Yesterday—yesterday! did
 “ you say?

“ YES, Mademoiselle, but he would
 “ not take a livre of it, although——”

“ O! where is he, where is my fa-
 “ ther? I have not seen him these
 “ many long months, and have been
 “ engaged in a fruitless search after
 “ him several tedious days past. O! let

“ me beg you to take me to him, with-
“ out delay.”

“ I THOUGHT you had lived with him
“ at his lodgings, Mademoiselle, or I
“ would, before now, have shewn you
“ where they are. He resides not more
“ than fifty yards from this spot.”

“ O! LET me fly to him. I have
“ not time now to tell you, why I have
“ been separated from him. Now, the
“ moments are precious; lead me, I
“ beseech you, to his ever-valued pre-
“ sence, that I may pour out the hap-
“ piness and the joy I feel in his dear
“ embraces.”

SHE was then led by her con-ductress
into the next street; who, pointing to a
house before them, informed her that he

lived there. She flew along the street on the wings of filial duty and affection, her tender bosom beating with anxious eagerness, to meet her father, from whom she had been so long separated. She knocked at the door, which was opened for her, and she was admitted.

CHAPTER V.

.....How could my tongue
 Take pleasure, and be lavish in thy praise!
 How could I speak thy nobleness of nature!

Rowe.

MONTFORT, who had expected his daughter's arrival for some days with impatience, received her with great joy. She rushed into his arms, as he held them extended towards her, and 'hung, dissolved in tenderness, on his neck,

unable for some time to give utterance to speech.

AT last, she cried, "O, my father, " how happy am I in this meeting! " happy to find you in health, and " happy to be, once more, under the " protection of the best of parents! " Little does my dearest father know, " what his Matilda has suffered since " last we parted!"

WHEN he was informed of Baron Longuaville's treatment of his darling daughter, he paced the room in thoughtful silence, for some time. At length, he exclaimed, "Villain—villain!" and was again buried in thought.

THE next day, as she was going to pay for her lodgings at the *pâtissier's*,

she saw Jaques, near the spot where the accident had happened to the carriage. He informed her, that having lost her in the crowd, he could not tell which road she had taken; that he had been upon the watch for her every day, in hopes of seeing her, near the place where they had parted. He attended her home, and then went for her port-manteau, which she began to be much in need of.

MATILDA again enjoyed peace and happiness, in the society, and under the protection of her father, exercising all her many attractive and tender attentions, that never failed to please, and which seemed to be the only solace he enjoyed. She played upon her lute, as she was wont at the cottage of Le Pui, and sang the airs that she knew he most

admired; which caused him, for a time, to forget, at least to suspend, the thoughts of his former melancholy. He appeared a different man, to what she had ever before seen him. He was gay and lively in his conversation, full of anecdote, his discourse being entertaining and exhilarating, at the same time instructive and improving to the mind.

ALTHOUGH his spirits were in so improved a state, he still lived the same recluse life that he had done formerly; never leaving the house, but under cover of the night, at which time Matilda and he generally walked for an hour or two. Or, sometimes, wrapping himself in his *roquelaure*, he took her to one of the theatres, where he always chose one of the most dark and retired corners, from whence they could see what was pass-

ing on the stage, as well as over the greatest part of the house, without themselves being conspicuous.

THEY had one evening taken their usual station, when a young man, at a little distance, seemed to eye them with scrutinizing curiosity; he approached them, and she knew him to be Count Saint Claude. He stopped a second or two, and gazed at her with eagerness, as if he was going to accost her; he then suddenly turned about, and went another way.

As he retreated from them, she pointed him out to her father, informing him, at the same time, who he was. Montfort seemed thoughtful. He was restless on his seat. He rose to depart, although the performance was not near

over. However, an interesting scene then coming on, and Matilda expressing a wish to see it, he seated himself again, and remained till the whole of the entertainments of the evening were concluded; when they left the theatre, with the crowd.

As they were turning into the street, in which their lodgings were, Montfort by the light from the lamps, saw at a distance behind them, a man, who seemed to be watching them; the moment the door of the house was opened, he disappeared, turning back, the same way he had come.

MONTFORT appeared very uneasy; he was silent the whole of the remaining part of the evening. Nor was Matilda more at ease than her father.

Baron Longuaville was constantly in her thoughts; and her fears now were, that he had seen her at the theatre, and that it was him who had watched them home.

HER conjectures were right. He happened to be there that night, and met with Count Saint Claude, who informed him, that he had seen Matilda, and pointed out the place where she sat. He watched her closely afterwards, and mixing with the departing audience, followed her father and her, till he saw them clear of the crowd, when he dropped behind, but kept them in view, till they entered their lodgings.

AFTER this, neither Montfort or his daughter stirred out of the house for some time.

THEY were one evening alarmed with a noise and bustle upon the stairs, several voices speaking at the same time. The sound of footsteps approached the room where they were sitting. Montfort started from his seat, and fixed his eyes upon the door with eager anxiety, expecting that it would open, and that some unwelcome visitor would enter. Matilda turned pale, and trembling, threw herself upon a sofa, sinking with apprehension, every moment expecting to see Baron Longuaville.

THE noise still continued, but had passed their door. Montfort now ventured to look out, and finding the landlord upon the stairs, inquired the cause of the bustle he had heard. He was informed that the goods of one of his fellow-

lodgers, had been seized for debt; that they were then removing them, and going to drag the unfortunate man to prison.

“CAN I speak to the officers?” said Montfort.

“I HAVE no doubt you may,” said the other; “if you please, I will send “ them to you.”

THEY soon made their appearance, when Montfort inquired the amount of their demand; and learning what it was, desired that they would, for a few minutes, desist from the exercise of their duty, whilst he spoke to the unhappy debtor. He then sent to request, that he would do him the favour of coming up to him; and being convinced that the

debt had been unavoidably contracted for the bare necessities of life, he discharged it; and freed his goods from seizure, which were replaced in his room, from whence they had been removed.

MONTFORT, who always derived as much pleasure from the exercise of his philanthropy, as the object of it felt benefit, stopped, as soon as it was in his power, the effusions of the poor man's gratitude; which, if it had been allowed, would have shewn itself in almost endless thanks; as it was, his expressive silence spoke the feelings of his heart.

MONTFORT found something interesting in the conversation and manners of Lacroix, and frequently invited him to his apartments. During one of his visits,

as Matilda was sitting at the window reading, she gave an involuntary scream, which alarmed her father, and startled Lacroix. The former inquired the cause of it, and was informed that she just then saw the Baron Longuaville, standing opposite the window, gazing upon her.

“HE is still standing there,” said Lacroix.

MONTFORT went to the window. Longuaville caught the sight of him, and, starting, quickly moved away, before he was distinctly seen by the other.

MONTFORT continued buried in thought for some time; at last he broke silence, and said to Lacroix, “I find

“ you are acquainted with the person of
“ Baron Longuaville. Have you known
“ him long?”

“ I HAVE known him many years,”
said Lacroix, “ and have known his
“ villanies—villanies, that, if I was to di-
“ vulge, would call upon him to answer
“ for, to the injured laws of his coun-
“ try. He knows his life is in my hands,
“ and on that account he has often
“ sought mine; for, at no crime would
“ he stop, to accomplish his aim, be
“ that aim what it might; and, having
“ attained it, at no crime would he
“ stop to hide his guilt from the world.
“ The man that has committed murder,
“ which I can prove against him, would
“ not hesitate again to imbrue his hands
“ in blood, if he could not, without it,
“ keep that murder secret.”

THIS account of Longuaville, together with his persecution of Matilda, added to which, the discovery that he was watching the house, served to make Montfort more uneasy on his daughter's account, and he determined upon changing their lodgings, for the short time he intended to remain at Paris.

HE accordingly moved into a street, in another quarter of the city. They had not been long there, before the Baron was again seen by Matilda, standing before the windows of their new lodging. He stood with his eyes fixed upon the house, for some time; and, as he turned away, pulled out a card and a pencil, as if making some remarks on the situation.

THIS determined Montfort immediately to leave Paris; and he prepared to depart, the next morning at day break, for the vale Le Pui.

MATILDA was rejoiced at this determination of her father. She looked forward with joy, to the time, when she should be no longer under any apprehensions from Baron Longuaville, and when she should pass her days happily and quiet, in the valued converse of her father, at the rural and peaceful cottage of the vale.

CHAPTER VI.

Ah Fear! ah frantic Fear!

I see, I see thee near.

I know thy hurried step, thy haggard eye!

Like thee I start, like thee disorder'd fly,

For, lo what monsters in thy train appear!

COLLINS.

As soon as the eastern sky was dappled with the streaks of morn, Montfort and his daughter entered the carriage, to bid adieu to Paris. The streets along which they passed were still; the hurry of the busy citizens had

not begun; they yet were buried in sleep profound, forgetful of their labour past, or of their future care. They passed the ramparts, without having seen any body, save the watchful sentinel on duty, who, true to his trust, was steady at his post.

As they turned their backs upon the city, the sovereign of light rose majestically from his eastern bed, shedding his all-cheering rays around, and calling to their daily work, the industrious inhabitants of the scattered villages and single cots. Now, they met the ruddy milkmaids, with their clean-scoured pails, hieing to the verdant pastures, to ease the lacteal vessels of the ruminating kine, of their swelling load. Now, the hardy husbandmen, in their wood-soaled shoes, with spade and mattock on their

shoulders, hasting to commence their laborious toil, by piercing the bowels of the torpid earth. Then, the shepherds, driving from the pens their fleecy charge, carelessly whistling as they trudged along.

“ THEY know no care,” said Montfort; “ no anxiety invades their peaceful breasts; no envy corrodes their contented minds. Let blow storms, that to the centre shake and convulse states and empires; kingdoms overturn; and annihilate armies; they, unmoved still, pursue their daily toil, unmindful of the havock cursed ambition makes.”

AFTER travelling by easy stages, on the evening of the last day, as they descended a steep and craggy hill, that

overlooked the vale, they came in sight of the cottage of Le Pui. Matilda's heart beat high at the joyful sight. Night began to spread her sable wings before they reached it.

THE news of their arrival soon ran through the vale, and the next day, the inhabitants poured in crowds, to the cottage, to welcome them home. The unfeigned joy that pervaded the neighbourhood, was the strongest testimony that could be given, of the high estimation in which both Montfort and his daughter were held.

MANY disputes had arisen among the inhabitants, during his absence, which had caused parties to be formed, and the vale was disturbed with bickerings and contentions. They all gave

way, however, to welcome home Matilda and her father.

THE contending parties now agreed to solicit Montfort, to settle their differences. This he did, in a way so satisfactory, that peace and harmony were soon restored, and the cause of their former quarrels buried in oblivion. Upon this restoration of concord, the happy cottagers met together, to celebrate their new-made peace, by a dance on the lawn. The blithsome swains, and their rosy-cheeked partners, tripped lightly to the pipe and tabor's airy tune. They kept up their jollity to a late hour, the pale moon lending her silvery brightness, to light them down the mazy dance.

MONTFORT felt gratified, that he

had been able to restore unanimity among his neighbours, in a manner with which all parties were satisfied, as was testified by a strict adherence to the conditions settled by him.

HE now frequently took his morning walk down the vale, and his distant ramble o'er the country round; sometimes visiting the ruins of St. Aubyn's castle. As he was one day sitting, in a contemplative mood, behind a large stone that had fallen from one of the mouldering turrets, he heard the sound of footsteps ascending the stairs from the vaults, and, at the same time, a deep heavy groan assailed his ears. He sat still, the stone hiding him from view, and he saw old Dumain, who, as he reached the top of the stairs, turned to

look back; and, lifting up his eyes to Heaven, in which posture he continued some time, heaved a deep sigh, which convinced Montfort that the groan he had heard, had proceeded from the same breast. He sat concealed till the old cottager had got some distance from the castle, when he determined once more to examine the subterraneous vaults.

HE descended the same staircase that old Dumain had just before come up, but he did not find any alteration since he had been in before, except the door of the recess, which contained the skeleton, was now open, whereas, it had been left by him, the last time he was in that vault, closely shut, as he had found it; and some rubbish near it seemed to have been lately disturbed,

by which it appeared that the old man had just been visiting that part.

MONTFORT thought it was very probable, old Dumain had, in some way or other, been concerned in the death of the person whose skeleton remained there; and which, it was not unlikely, the sealed paper that he had before found, would elucidate, whenever he could find an opportunity to give it to the Marquis de Saint Aubyn.

HE left the castle, and after a circuitous walk, came to the bowery hill behind the cottage, where he found Matilda on the look out for him. They descended into the garden, and went in to dinner, at which they were seated, when they saw a carriage stop at the garden gate. Montfort appeared agitated.

Matilda thought only of Baron Longuaville, and was as much agitated as her father. A middle aged man alighted. Montfort looked earnestly at him.

THE stranger was shewn into the study, and Montfort went to him. They continued together for a considerable time, during which, their conversation was often very loud. When they came into the parlour, where Matilda had remained, her father introduced his companion to her, as an old acquaintance whom he had not seen for many years, by the name of Girard.

HE stopped at the cottage for some days; during which time, Montfort and he were frequently closeted for hours together. He never went out in the day, but, wrapping himself in his *roque-*

laure, and nearly covering his face with it, he walked out after sun-set, generally accompanied by Montfort.

“ I WONDER,” said Alice to Jaques, as Matilda was, unobserved by them, sitting reading behind a clump of shrubs, in the garden, “ I wonder my master, “ and Monsieur Girard are so fond of “ walking out in the night. If they “ were to walk at this time o’day, instead of being locked in the study as “ they now are, I am sure it would be “ more pleasant.”

AYE,” said Jaques, “ and to take “ such walks too! Why, last night, “ when it was so dark, I could hardly “ see my hand before me, and I am “ sure I trembled every joint of me.

“—Not that I would have you think that
“ I fear any thing; no, I can face any
“ man, or I dare encounter a bear, or a
“ wolf, let me be but armed; but still
“ I could not help trembling——”

“ WHY, what did you tremble at?
“ If you are so bold as you want to
“ make one believe, I should think no-
“ thing would make you tremble.

“ TRUE, Alice, it was at nothing
“ that I trembled. I shudder now when
“ I think of it.”

“ PISH, what a fool! why, bold as
“ you would be thought, you would
“ tremble at a shadow.”

“ WHY it was but a shadow; to be

“ sure, all ghosts are but shadows, there-
“ fore, they are nothing, and it is only
“ at them that I tremble.”

“ IF you never tremble till you see a
“ ghost, you may still keep up your cha-
“ racter for courage.”

“ DON'T you believe it,” said Jaques;
“ don't you believe it, Alice.”

“ BELIEVE what? Believe that you
“ are bold, and courageous?” No, I
“ don't believe much of that.”

“ BELIEVE what you will,” said he,
“ but if you had seen the ghost that I
“ saw last night, you would have trem-
“ bled till you had——”

“ PSHA!” said she, interrupting him,
“ all the effects of your own fear, and
“ yet you want to be thought a bold
“ man. And where was it, pray, that
“ you fancied you saw this ghost?

“ NAY, it was no fancy, for all the
“ country says, the old castle of Saint
“ Aubyn is haunted, and it was as sure
“ a ghost that I saw come out, as I am
“ now standing here.”

“ AND what shape was it in; had it
“ a head, or did you see its neck spout-
“ ing blood?”

“ WHY, it was in the shape of an
“ old man; he carried a small lamp in
“ his hand, and glided slowly along,
“ till he was out of sight. I hope my

“ master won’t send me past the old
“ ruins again at night. I ran on as fast
“ as I could, expecting the ghost to
“ follow me; but when I turned my
“ head, and saw that he had gone
“ another way, I plucked up my spirits,
“ and went on my errand: but the
“ worst of it was, I had to come by the
“ castle on my return. I resolved,
“ however, to run past it as fast as I
“ could; but, just as I got up to it, I
“ saw my master and Monsieur Girard,
“ with a lamp in the hand of one of
“ them, enter through one of the bro-
“ ken gates, and, you know, they were
“ not at home, till between one and
“ two this morning. Lord! that they
“ should be fond of such dismal walks
“ in the night! I could face any thing

“ in the day time, without fear.—O,
“ Lord! what’s that?”

“ WHAT?” said Alice.

“ DID you not hear something stir?”
said he.

“ No, nothing but the wind rustling
“ in the trees.”

“ WELL, the blessed Virgin defend
“ us from ghosts, and haunted castles,”
said he, as he parted from Alice.

MATILDA smiled at the courage of Jaques. She could not help, however, being surprised at her father and Girard visiting the castle in that secret manner

by night; which, with the confusion and agitation that the former shewed, on the arrival of the stranger at the cottage, convinced her that both he, and some former event that had happened at the castle of Saint Aubyn, were nearly connected with the uneasiness of mind, that her father laboured under. She determined, however, never again to offend him, by endeavouring to discover the cause.

As she returned from walking one morning, she entered the parlour, where her father and Girard were in earnest conversation. Just as she opened the door, she heard the name of Dumain pronounced by the former with great emphasis; and that of Baron Longuaville by the latter. As soon as they ob-

served her, which was not till she had nearly crossed the room, so earnest were they in discourse, they stopped, and Montfort asked her some trifling question; in evident agitation and confusion of mind.

NEARLY the whole of the time, that Girard remained at the cottage, Montfort and he spent together, generally locked in the study, except when they walked out at night, which they usually did together. Now and then, indeed, Girard would walk alone; but whether alone, or in company with Montfort, he always disguised himself, by wrapping his *roquelaure* about his face.

AFTER Girard had taken his departure from the vale Le Pui, Montfort

seemed to be constantly absorbed in thought: not the gloomy melancholy cast of mind, that he had formerly shewn, which broke out in frequent sighs, and sudden starts; but, as if engaged in some undertaking of magnitude, at which his head was labouring, to bring it to a successful maturity.

CHAPTER VII.

Good heaven! what sorrows gloom'd that parting
day!

GOLDSMITH.

SOON after Girard had left the cottage, as Montfort and his daughter were sitting at breakfast, they were alarmed with a violent rapping at the front door; and shortly after, two men entered the parlour, and put a paper into the hands of the former. He looked at it, and appeared uncommonly disturbed in his

mind. He sat with his elbows upon the table, and his head rested upon his hands, for some time, in silence. At last, he said, "I am ready to accompany you; allow me but an hour or two, for my daughter to get ready for her departure."

"OUR orders are peremptory," said one of them, "to prevent you speaking to any one, and to bring you alone, with all your papers; which, now you are our prisoner, we are to answer for; therefore, you must prepare to go with us immediately."

"Go, where?" said Matilda, with frantic emotion.

"To Paris, Mademoiselle," said he, who appeared to be the chief.

“ AND, I not allowed to accompa-
“ ny him! Oh! my dearest father;
“ they shall not part us! Here will I
“ hang,” catching hold of his coat;
“ ere they force me from my grasp,
“ they shall let life’s purple fountain
“ flow, and leave me here a spiritless
“ corse.”

“ OUR orders from the king are absolute,” repeated the officer.

“ FROM the king?” cried Matilda.

“ YES, Mademoiselle, and it is as
“ much as our lives are worth, to let
“ any body have converse with your fa-
“ ther, before we have conveyed him, in
“ safety to Paris, and lodged him there
“ in prison.”

“ OH! my father!” she said, throwing herself into his arms.

“ BE calm, my darling,” said Montfort; “ these officers do but their duty, “ in obeying the mandates of the king, “ and I must submit.

“ As soon as possible, after I have “ left the cottage, let Jaques accompany you to Villeroy Castle. The Countess will be glad to receive you, and “ will be a protectress, in the absence “ of your father.”

“ TALK not,” said she, “ of Villeroy “ Castle, my dearest father. Can I be “ in the midst of gaiety and splendour, “ when you, the ever revered author of “ my being, and guardian of my help-

“ less infant days, are languishing in a
 “ prison; perhaps, bereft of every com-
 “ fort, nay of the necessaries which life
 “ demands? Forbid it duty, forbid it
 “ nature! No, I will follow you to Pa-
 “ ris; I will, humble as I am, throw my
 “ self at the feet of the king, and im-
 “ plore his mercy, to suffer me to smooth
 “ your rugged pillow, in the dungeon’s
 “ gloom, to be a willing——”

“ No more, my child,” said he, in-
 terrupting her, “ it cannot be. The
 “ king would not listen to your prayer;
 “ and to go to Paris now, would be run-
 “ ning into destruction’s jaws. Consi-
 “ der, my dearest life, your late escape
 “ there, and think what you might
 “ have again to encounter.”

“ OH, Sir! I never before knew a dif-

" ficulty in obeying you. Recal, re-
 " cal the sentence, before it be too
 " late, and suffer me to live in the hope
 " of being your solace and your com-
 " fort, in the solitary recess of a dark
 " dungeon's depth."

" HEAVEN knows, my darling child,
 " with what reluctance 'tis I leave you.
 " My tongue refuses its office, when it
 " should say, farewell: my eyes refuse
 " ceasing to gaze on that face, whose
 " smiles so oft have cheered my heavȳ
 " heart: my feet refuse to move, and
 " seem by inchantment fixed to the
 " floor, on which my dear Matilda
 " stands."

THE officer reminded him, that the
 day was quickly passing on, and that
 they were obliged to be in Paris by a

given time. Montfort requested only half an hour, to spend in private with his daughter, at the expiration of which, he would be ready to accompany them. The officers granted him the indulgence he asked, and they left the parlour, taking their station at the outside of the door.

AT the end of the half hour, they knocked at, and soon after opened the door; which he, understanding that the time was expired, considered as an indication of their wish that he should depart. He called Alice, and left Matilda in a state bordering on frenzy, in her care.

HE then entered a carriage, that the officers had brought with them, which, surrounded by a troop of horse, drove down the valley, on its way to Paris.

Matilda got to the window, and followed it with her eyes, as long as she could see it. When it was no longer to be discovered, she sunk upon the sofa, in a state of stupor and insensibility.

ALICE conveyed her to bed, from which she did not rise again for many days; during which time, she scarcely spoke, or took notice of any person, but appeared to be in a situation, which it was not to be expected she could long survive.

SHE would at times call, with a frantic voice, on her father to help her, and save her from a rude assassin's grasp; and, as if recollecting herself, would then suddenly exclaim, "Alas! my
" father stands more in need of help
" than I do. Confined in a loathsome

“dungeon, loaded perhaps with chains,
 “and denied the wholesome nutriment
 “that nature calls for, what help can
 “he render me? What help does he
 “not stand himself in need of? O, mis-
 “erable father! wretched daughter!”

After which she would again sink into a
 state of insensibility, regardless of all
 about her.

AT length, however, her constitution
 got the better of her disorder, and she
 began to shew signs of convalescence.
 It was a long time, before she could
 leave her room, and longer still, before
 she could go out of the cottage. After
 she was able to walk in the garden,
 which, at first, she was obliged to be
 assisted in, with the arm of Alice, she
 recovered fast in her bodily health, but
 her mind was still loaded with oppres-

sion and grief. She now extended her walks up the hill behind the cottage, which had always been a favourite retirement; but it no longer had its charms in her eyes, and she used to descend from it, full of gloom and melancholy, from the recollection of past scenes.

HER health was now sufficiently restored, to allow her to think of putting in execution her father's desire, of placing herself under the protection of the Countess Villeroy. She began to pack up her things, with the intention of leaving the cottage in the course of a day or two. An alarm, however, that she experienced, determined her to accelerate her departure, and to set off the next morning.

As she was ascending the bowery

hill, she thought she heard the sound of voices near her. She was alarmed, and crept softly into a shady arbour of thick-growing laurels, till the persons, from whom the voices came, should pass; as, upon listening, she found they were approaching, and, if they were hostilely inclined, they would with ease overtake her, should she attempt to regain the cottage. She, therefore, thought it more prudent to lie here concealed; which determination she had soon reason to rejoice in.

THE arbour she had entered, was impervious to the sight; and, as she was hid from those without, so were they concealed from her view, she therefore could not see their persons. She, however, heard sufficient to create in her, the most serious disturbance of

mind, not doubting but she was the subject of their conversation.

“ SINCE her illness,” says one, “ she
 “ never goes far from home. I under-
 “ stand she sometimes walks up this
 “ hill, but not often ; if, therefore, we
 “ can’t meet with her here, we must
 “ take the first opportunity of making
 “ our way into the cottage, contriving
 “ it at a time that their servant man is
 “ absent from it ; we may not then ex-
 “ pect to meet with any great resist-
 “ ance, as there will only be a woman
 “ servant in the house with her.”

“ I DON’T expect we shall meet with
 “ much difficulty,” said the other,
 “ even if the servant man was at
 “ home, as we could outmatch him in
 “ strength.”

THEY had now got so far past the harbour, that she could hear no more; but, she had heard enough to fix in her a determination to let no time unnecessarily elapse, before she set out for Ville-roy Castle.

IN the evening, she told Jaques to be ready early in the morning, before break of day, that they might leave the vale before the inhabitants had risen from their beds, and consequently pass through it unobserved; as, she had no doubt, but the persons whose voices she had overheard, were upon the look-out for her, and that they were employed by Baron Longuaville.

SHE, more than ever, missed the protection of her father, in whose presence

fear almost lost its force. She retired to bed, but rest did not visit her, and she rose in the morning, after a short and sleepless night.

CHAPTER VIII.

..... Hark! the bell
 Of death beats slow! heard ye the note profound?
 It pauses now; and now, with rising knell,
 Flings to the hollow gale its sullen sound.

MASON.

ERE the jocund lark had raised his
 tuneful matins, or the grim shades of
 night were, by the orient dawn dispers-
 ed, Matilda accompanied by Jaques, left
 the cottage of Le Pui; and, passing

along the vale, mounted a hill, across which lay their road, just as the sun, with broad and bright refulgence, was emerging from behind the towering Alps, diffusing his rays, with cheerful lustre, on the many-coloured bosom of the grateful earth. That sun, which she had so oft with awful pleasure viewed, with all the splendour of glorious majesty attending his golden car, as he proudly rose from his Eastern throne, had now to her lost his grandeur. Her mind was wholly employed on her father's melancholy situation, which she depicted to herself in a form most horrible.

“ THIS sun,” she exclaimed mentally, “ which sheds his rays on all mankind in common, my dear father is shut out from; shut out even from

" their reflection; buried in a dark
 " dungeon's gloom, his companions
 " noxious reptiles, that serve to make
 " more noisome his dismal subterra-
 " neous abode."

EXCEPTING Baron Longuaville, who
 sometimes came across her mind, she
 thought of nothing but her father. The
 beauty of the country through which
 they rode; the different views of nature,
 from different points; the passing ob-
 jects on the road; all of which used to
 afford her a fund of amusement in tra-
 velling, had lost their attraction, she
 hardly ever lifting up her eyes, to look
 around her.

WHEN they came within sight of
 Villeroy Castle, her spirits all at once
 improved, she felt a degree of lightness

of heart, that she had not experienced since her father was forced from the cottage. This was inspired by a sudden hope, that the Countess Villeroy, whose friends, she knew, had great power at court, might be the means of obtaining the release of her father, by their interference with the king. As they approached nearer to the castle, this hope increased, and she wondered, she had never thought of it before.

THEY drove through the great gates, up the avenue, to the hall door, where she alighted, full of the idea that had just taken possession of her mind; and which, hope told her, could not but be attended with success. Her heart fluttered with eager expectation, as Jaques lifted up the weighty knocker, anxious

for entrance, that no time might be lost, in endeavouring to procure the enlargement from his bonds, of her unfortunate father.

THE door opened; an old footman appeared with melancholy in his countenance, who, to the inquiry she made after the Countess, answered with a shake of his head. She went forward, and soon met with intelligence that blasted all the hopes which she so lately had indulged in, and filled her with grief and disappointment.

SHE was informed, that soon after she had left the castle, the last time, the Countess's disorder, consequent upon the hurts she had formerly received, from the overturning of her carriage, had returned with double violence, and

that the physicians had now given her up, declaring, as their opinion, that she could not live many days.

WHEN the Countess was informed of her arrival, she sent for her into her chamber, but had not power to speak. She took her by the hand, and grasped it fast in her's with a convulsive force, casting, at the same time, a look of tenderness on her, that caused the gentle Matilda to be dissolved in tears. The Countess observed them, as they trickled down her delicate cheek; she lifted up her hand, upon which they fell and pressed it to her lips, then let it fall, her strength being no longer able to hold it.

MATILDA left the bed-side, and sobbed aloud. She soon after left the

chamber, and met the physicians upon the stairs. From them she had the melancholy corroboration of what she had before been informed, upon her first entrance into the castle.

SHE spent the next night in the Countess's chamber, and watched by her bed-side. The beginning was passed restlessly, her fever running very high; however, towards morning, she got a refreshing sleep for about half an hour, and after it, seemed to be relieved in some measure, from the pain she had before been in.

SHE could now, with considerable difficulty nevertheless, say a few words to Matilda, which she had attempted several times before.

“ My dear,” said she, grasping
 her hand, “ once before, when I lay
 “ upon this bed of sickness and of
 “ pain, I attempted to relate to you a
 “ narrative, which it is necessary your
 “ father should be acquainted with;
 “ weakness, that then prevented me,
 “ has now the same effect upon me,
 “ and will only allow me time to inform
 “ you, that you will find among my pa-
 “ pers, one folded and sealed, directed
 “ for him, which I request you will de-
 “ liver to him, as soon as possible, after
 “ my decease. The reason why I ne-
 “ ver mentioned the circumstance to
 “ you, after my recovery from that ill-
 “ ness was, because I thought I should
 “ see your father in person, to whom
 “ I could relate the tale myself, but
 “ that happiness being denied me, I
 “ must ———.”

SHE could say no more, but sunk upon her pillow, fatigued by the exertion she had used, in saying what she had done.

THE fever now returned with increased force; she became delirious; at last her strength was exhausted; her soul hung quivering on her lips; she heaved a gentle sigh, and it winged its flight into the mansions of the blessed.

THIS was a heavy blow upon Matilda. At the time she stood most in need of protection, to be thus deprived of the only source, to which she could on earth look for it, was a stroke she was totally unprepared for. She knew not what steps to pursue. She had no parent to guard her, no friend to give her advice. She had no home to go to;

for to the cottage she dare not return, and Villeroy Castle was soon to become a tenantless mansion. She had sent to Madame Lunelle, at Viviers, and learned, that she and Madame Melun, with the Chevalier, had been some time, at the *chateau*, in Bigorre. She therefore determined to remain where she was, till after the funeral, when she would run all hazards in repairing to Paris; and endeavour to share her father's imprisonment in the damp and noisome cells of the gloomy dungeon, in which he might be confined.

HER time now hung heavy on her hands; she knew not how to get the tedious day over. She could not read, her mind was too much occupied by her trouble and distress. She, some-

times, would go into the music-room, but even there, she could not find amusement for her perturbed spirits. She roved, listless where she went, through the wood's extent: with melancholy sadness, she traced the margin of the pellucid lake, and followed the meandering course of the limpid brook, that, murmuring, rippled along its rocky bed, till it brought her to the shady grove, in which was seated the now forsaken banquetting house. Here, she would sit for hours, wrapt in the reflection of her forlorn and comfortless situation.

THE day arrived, for the funeral of the lamented Countess, whose remains were followed to their everlasting home, by a long line of tenantry, and of neighbours, who assembled to pay their

last sad duty to their departed patroness.

THE hearse moves slowly on; the nodding plumes wave in sable sadness, to the solemn pace; the mourners follow, in flowing cloaks of black attired, each breast beating in unison at the awful scene. The hollow sound of the deep-mouthed bell, from a distance, strikes the ear, and vibrates on the afflicted heart. The procession at the sacred fane arrives; the pealing organ breathes its solemn notes, accompanying the choristers, pouring their religious lays, in a requiem for the peace-departed spirit of the dead. The holy priest the hallowed forms goes through; the yawning grave receives its lifeless tenant,—the destined food for worms; the cold damp earth's thrown in, re-

sounding hollow on the coffin's lid; the ponderous stone upon the surface presses with a settling weight, and, for ever, closes the last appointed house for man!!!

CHAPTER IX.

.....How fearful
And dizzy 'tis, to cast one's eyes so low!

SHAKESPEARE.

THE morning after the funeral solemnities were performed, Matilda took her usual melancholy walk, and seated herself in the banquetting house, viewing the picture that she had, the first time she was here, noticed as being so like her father. Her eyes were fixed upon the canvas; and, being absorbed

in thought, she did not perceive that two men had entered, till she was seized, and hurried away to a carriage, that stood in the avenue, at the back of the castle. She was forced into it, along with one of the men, when it drove off at a great rate.

DEPLORABLE as she thought her condition was before, she now found herself in a worse, as she did not doubt, but that she was once more in the power of Baron Longuaville. She was ready to sink under the idea; but she called to her aid all her resolution, which was strengthened by the recollection of her father's situation, and endeavoured to support herself under her affliction; trusting to that Providence to deliver her, who had before so unexpectedly raised her up a friend, in the

person of Filesac, when she least expected it.

THE carriage drove rapidly on, with the blinds up, so that she could not see the road they took. It stopped suddenly, and the door being opened, she found they were upon the banks of the Rhone. A barge was in waiting for them, into which she was carried, when they pushed off into the stream, and sailed with swift motion on the glassy surface. They crossed the lake of Geneva, and stopped at Lausanne, where a carriage was procured, and they proceeded into the fruitful country of the Pays de Vaud.

THEY had travelled for a considerable time in the dark; night had passed its limits, and the harbinger of day,

- sounding his shrill clarion, proclaimed the approach of morn, when the carriage stopped at Fribourg. They alighted, before they entered the town, the rocks and precipices, among which it was built, rendering it impossible for a carriage to pass the streets. They proceeded through it on foot; and leaving it again, at about three miles distance, she was led up a rock of towering height, by means of steps cut in it by human hands, and down the opposite side into the valley, by precipices huge surrounded on every side, up which it was not possible to ascend, without the assistance of some helping hand.

IN this sequestered place, she was shewn into a low-roofed cot, that seemed to be built out of the remains of a

large edifice, many of the outer walls of which were still standing, and had once, nearly surrounded the little vale's extent. An old man and his wife, were the only inhabitants of the cottage and the valley, and with them she was, by her conductor left; who, with the assistance of his companion, remounted the precipice's almost perpendicular height, and she saw no more of him.

SHE expected that she should now be informed, of the cause of her being conveyed to this recluse place, but the old couple declared that they did not know; all, they said, they were acquainted with was, that by the desire of their son, who was the person that brought her, she was to reside with

them for some time, and not to be suffered to go out of the valley; more they could not inform her of.

SHE continued at this cot, for a considerable time, without hearing any thing of, or again seeing the person who had conducted her there. Her time was spent in gloomy apprehensions, which caused tears involuntarily to steal down her lovely cheek, as she sat lost in thought.

“ THIS is a dull place, to be sure,” said old Isabel, “ for a young person
“ to live in, but Fabian and I will do
“ all we can to make it agreeable to
“ you.”

“ I AM obliged to you,” said Matil-

da, a deep sigh bursting from her heaving bosom.

“ You seem in trouble, Mademoi-
 “ selle,” said Fabian. “ What can
 “ have happened at your tender years,
 “ to cause such a heavy sigh, and
 “ those tears that trickle down your
 “ cheek?”

MATILDA thought there was something, both in old Fabian and his wife, that discovered they were not without “ the milk of human kindness,” which induced her to inform them, how she had been persecuted by Baron Longuaville, and of her fears, that it was by his direction, she had been conveyed there.

ISABEL, looking at her husband, said,

“ That is the nobleman that has ruined
 “ our son; and through him has ruined
 “ us, and obliged us to descend from
 “ ease and comfort, to end our days
 “ in poverty and solitude.”

“ If he expects to put in practice his
 “ wicked designs here, he may be mis-
 “ taken,” said Fabian. “ Old as I am,
 “ I have yet a soldier’s arm, that shall
 “ defend the unprotected and the inno-
 “ cent. This arm that has oft been
 “ raised, and often execution done, in
 “ defence of our rights and liberties,
 “ shall never be idle, when female dis-
 “ tress requires its executing venge-
 “ ance.”

THIS speech of Fabian’s, and the
 rough honest manner with which it was
 delivered, had the effect of calming the

fears of Matilda in a considerable degree; and, of imparting to her mind a serenity, that she did not expect to enjoy in her present situation.

THE little valley, in which the cottage was situated, appeared to be between three and four hundred yards in length, and about half as many broad. At one end, there was a little inclosure of verdant pasturage, which kept a goat or two, that supplied the cot with milk and cheese. A little garden joined it, the cultivation of which, with the tending his goats was the employment of the old man. Craggy, and almost perpendicular rocks of prodigious height, formed three sides of the valley, the other was a steep acclivity, rendered impassable by broken walls, some in fragments, lying prostrate on the ascending hill,

others still standing, in rude, but awful grandeur, the remains of a continued building of vast extent, from a once noble castle, that looked down from the towering height above, to the monastery that had covered the vale below, both now in ruins. Large heaps of rubbish, and of stones lay, as they had fallen, from the decaying walls above, at the base of the rugged rise, a barrier to all attempts at ascent.

As Matilda was one day walking by the fallen ruins, at the bottom of the hill, she discovered an opening in the rock, from which some decayed leaves, and dried moss had recently been blown by the wind, which had before stopped the aperture, and had hidden it from view. She, without hesitation, entered into it; and, after walking some time,

saw at the farther end a small light.— Day was too far advanced now, for her to explore this cavern; she therefore determined to return, and restrain her curiosity till the next day.

WHEN she got back to the cot, she found that Fabian and Isabel had spread their coarse, but cleanly board for supper. After their repast, she expressed a wish, to know in what manner their son had been ruined by Baron Longuaville as Isabel had before mentioned.

“ HE was a dutiful and tender heart-
“ ed young man,” said the old woman,
“ before he fell into bad company, but
“ that was the bane of him, as it is, and
“ ever will be, of all youth. He was
“ initiated into every kind of vice; and

“ soon dissipated, in extravagance, his
“ own fortune, which had been left him
“ by a relation, and brought his aged
“ parents to poverty and distress, by in-
“ ducing his father, from time to time,
“ to feed his wants, till nearly all we
“ had was gone.”

“ AY,” said Fabian, “ it was my
“ fatherly affection for my only child,
“ that occasioned the necessity of living
“ here, in our old age, in solitude and
“ obscurity. I spent my early days in
“ plenty, and in the bustle of a mar-
“ tial life; from which I retired, be-
“ cause I could no longer support the
“ expence of living as I had done.

“ I AM descended from an ancient
“ family, that has been resident in
“ Switzerland for centuries back, the

“ male parts of which, have always
 “ been bred soldiers, and have bled for
 “ our liberty and our religion.

“ I ENTERED the army at an early
 “ age, and served in many campaigns
 “ with such reputation, that I was soon
 “ promoted to the rank of lieutenant.
 “ It was my wish, and my intention,
 “ that my son should also embrace a
 “ soldier’s life, and I had, through my
 “ acquaintance and intimacy with our
 “ commanding officer, procured a com-
 “ mission for him, whilst he was yet at
 “ the university. After he had com-
 “ pleted his studies, he asked permis-
 “ sion to visit Paris, previous to his en-
 “ trance into the army; which I con-
 “ sented to, as I wished he should have
 “ a knowledge, practically, of that
 “ world, which he had hitherto known

“ only theoretically, in order to put
 “ him upon a footing with his fellow
 “ officers.

“ WHILST he was in Paris, it, unfor-
 “ tunately for him, happened, that a
 “ distant relation, who was his godfa-
 “ ther, died; and having no family of his
 “ own, left a very handsome property
 “ to his godson. I say, it unfortunately
 “ happened for him, because, from that
 “ time, he began to think, that the
 “ duty and affection which he had here-
 “ tofore considered as due to his pa-
 “ rents, were no longer binding upon
 “ him; being no longer under the ne-
 “ cessity of having his wants supplied
 “ by his father's hand.

“ INSTEAD of repairing, at the ex-
 “ piration of his leave of absence, to

“ his regiment, he continued at Paris,
“ immersed in debauchery; and he was
“ degradingly superseded in his com-
“ mission.

“ At this time it was, that he be-
“ came acquainted with Baron Longua-
“ ville; who is as notorious a sharper, as
“ any that frequents the gaming houses
“ in the French capital. It was by gam-
“ bling, that he formerly supported him-
“ self, and it was pretty well known, by
“ false play; in which he was assisted by
“ a set of hangers-on, who lived out of
“ his depredations: and, though, by the
“ death of a relation, he has succeeded
“ to a large property, and considerable
“ estates, he still has such a propensity
“ towards the vice, that he follows the
“ practice, as he did, when he could
“ not live without it.

“ It was in his company, that my son
“ lost all his property, and I have heard
“ it shrewdly suspected, that he was
“ by him, and his associates, basely
“ cheated out of it. However, be that
“ as it may, he at last got him so far in
“ his power, both as to money concerns,
“ and in the commission of atrocities
“ and crimes for his benefit and profit,
“ which, if known, would call for his
“ life to pay the forfeit, that he dare
“ not retreat. The Baron takes the ad-
“ vantage of this, and employs him up-
“ on all occasions of hazard and diffi-
“ culty.

“ My son has, more than once, hesi-
“ tated in his readiness to execute his
“ plans, when they have been attended
“ with circumstances that were at vari-
“ ance with his feelings; but, he has

“ for his own safety, been obliged to
“ go on ; otherwise, Longuaville has
“ threatened to accuse him to the law,
“ of some of the crimes that he has
“ committed, though he had urged
“ them, and they had been executed to
“ gratify his lust, or his avarice.

“ HE is a man of the most unprinci-
“ pled disposition, as I have reason to
“ say. It was under such threats as I
“ have mentioned, that he caused my
“ son to obtain from me sums of money,
“ with a promise of repayment, that has
“ never been fulfilled, or ever intended
“ to be, when they were borrowed.

“ BY these means, I was reduced
“ to poverty ; and was obliged to sell
“ my commission, which is all we
“ have had to live upon, for these

“ last twenty years; during which time,
 “ we have been in this retreat, secluded
 “ from society, and from the converse of
 “ the world, into which I have now no
 “ expectations of ever returning.

“ THE castle, that you see the re-
 “ mains of upon the hill above the val-
 “ ley, with a great extent of country
 “ round it, belongs to one who was an
 “ intimate friend and acquaintance
 “ of mine, when I lived in the world:
 “ he made me an offer of part of it, to
 “ reside in, which was then in a state
 “ of tolerable repair, whilst all the sur-
 “ rounding building was in decay.
 “ There we continued for some time,
 “ when we had a near escape from
 “ death, by the ground giving way,
 “ upon which our habitation stood,
 “ and overturning it, it rolled down the
 “ precipice in ruins, to the valley's

“ depth. Happening to be out at some
 “ distance at that time, we very fortu-
 “ nately saved our lives.

“ COEVAL with the castle, was a
 “ monastery in this vale, which joined
 “ together, by a communication up the
 “ side of the hill. Not any part of
 “ the castle being longer habitable,
 “ we fixed our residence in a part
 “ of this building, that the hand of
 “ time had left standing. After some
 “ labour, I succeeded in erecting, out
 “ of the old materials, this little cot,
 “ the part we before inhabited, being
 “ only the small room you see at the
 “ back.”

MATILDA was rejoiced, to find that
 she was not in the immediate power
 of any creature of Baron Longuaville;

and she hoped that she should be able to induce Fabian, not only to favour her departure, but to give her, also, all the assistance in his power, towards putting it into execution, which she determined to do the next evening.

She wished to pass out of the vale, and through the country in the immediate vicinity, under cover of the night, fearful lest somebody might be left to watch the only part of the rock, up which it was possible to ascend. She retired to bed, but could not sleep, her thoughts being fully employed, upon what route she should take, when she had, by Fabian's assistance, left the solitary place she was then in.

CHAPTER X.

A little lowly hermitage it was,
 Down in a dale, hard by a forest side;
 Farre from resort of people that did pass
 In travel to and fro: a little wide
 There was an holy chappell edified,
 Wherein the hermit duly went to say
 His holy things each morn and even tide.

SPENCER.

EARLY the next morning she rose,
 before the sun had gilded, with his
 radiant beams, the craggy tops of the
 torpid cliffs, that overhung the vale.—

As she approached the base of the hill, on which the ruins of the castle stood, she cast her eyes on the opening in the rock, she had discovered the day before. It then occurred to her, that the light she had seen at a distance in the cavern, might be the means of affording her an escape, without the assistance, or the knowledge of Fabian or his wife; which would be more secure, even if they were ever so much inclined to serve her. As, should they favour such an endeavour, and their son was to arrive soon afterwards, a sense of the danger he would be placed in, by her flight, might operate upon them, to discover the road she had taken, and her attempt would be frustrated.

WITHOUT further hesitation, she entered the cave, and soon again saw the

distant light. She went briskly along, and found it to increase in size, till she plainly perceived a spacious opening, fully large enough for a person to walk upright through.

SHE got up to it, and, passing out of the cavern, she found herself in a valley, on the other side of the hill on which the old castle stood; by which, she perceived that the subterraneous road she had come, was cut under it.

THE valley was covered with thick-growing umbrageous wood. Here and there, a large pointed rock reared among the trees its russet head, down the craggy sides of which, trickled, in melancholy murmurs, crystal thread-like streams, which uniting into one, formed a pellucid rill, that ran, in sportive

meanders, through the bottom of the stony glen. On one side, was a hill of stupendous height, on whose summit, stood the ruins of the castle. On every other, except where the transparent streamlet took its mazy course between two jetting mounts of majestic rudeness, and was by the flowing waters of the Sana embraced, it was surrounded by towering rocks, whose protuberant sides, were by the creeping ivy, and the deadly nightshade overspread, intermixed with bushes of the dark-hued holly, and the prickly thorn; and, here and there, thinly scattered, little patches of the verdant sod, interspersed with the pale-eyed pimpernel, the valley's lilly, and the yellow butter-cup. In the aspiring trees of forest stature, the chattering pies, and cawing rooks, built their aërial castles; whilst beneath, and on the sides

of the rock; in shrubs of humbler growth, the little winged choristers formed their mossy cells.

THE appearance of the valley altogether, was well calculated to inspire into the mind a pleasing melancholy; and was a scene that well suited the serious thoughts of Matilda. She proceeded along, taking the moss-grown banks of the little rivulet for her guide; and following its winding course, came to a spot more sequestered than the rest, when she found herself at the mouth of a cavern, formed by art, or nature, out of a rock of large extent. It was nearly covered with jessamines and wood-bines, which grew mantling up, and spread themselves o'er its torpid side. Before it, was a garden, stored with fruits and choicest flowers; it was

disposed in parterres and bowers, in which flourished, with luxuriant growth, the mountain ash, with its rich golden bells, hanging pendent from its branches, the delicate myrtle, and the sweet-scented eglantine, intermixed with the morbid yew, and mournful cypress.

As she stood, in a not unpleasing pensive mood, viewing the scene around her, a venerable figure, with a flowing beard, approached her from the cave through the garden. He opened the wicket, and invited her into his dwelling.

It was excavated by himself, he informed her, after a labour of upwards of twenty years. They entered first into a passage, on one side of

which was a parlour, in which the hermit generally sat; it was well stored with books, by authors of celebrity, both ancient and modern. The furniture was plain and rustic, but neat and useful, and the walls were adorned with drawings by his own pencil, chiefly from scriptural subjects. On the other side, was a larger room, which he called his dining hall; it was furnished in a similiar manner. Beyond these, lay two bed rooms, with a kitchen, all the chimneys of which, he had cut through the solid rock, of prodigious depth.—He had also formed a cellar, buttery, and other necessary apartments; and, at the end of the passage a chapel, beautifully finished, with a little sacristy attached to it; and, had hewn out of the rock above it, a steeple of towering height. The water that distilled

from different parts in crystal drops, he collected in a channel, along which it ran in a gentle stream, till it fell into a fount he had made, which served him for his table; as did two or three others, he had also formed, to water his garden, in times of thirst and drought.

AFTER shewing Matilda into the parlour, he inquired what had brought her to the hermitage; whether it was curiosity, or she was urged to it by want of his advice, in some trouble, with which she had been overtaken.

“THAT I am,” said she, “afflicted
 “with trouble, and with grief, is to me
 “a melancholy truth; but, though I
 “have occasion for your advice, reve-

“rend father, as much as ever distressed
 “being wanted it, it was not that
 “which brought me here, but
 “chance.”

“OPEN your griefs to me, my daughter,” said the holy hermit, “and, if
 “in my power to allay them, I shall
 “think it my duty, as it will be a source
 “of pleasure to me, to do it.”

SHE then informed him, how she was brought to the vale, inhabited by Fabian and his wife, and of her finding by chance, the subterraneous cut under the mountain, which led her into this valley; as well as of the precedent conduct of Baron Longuaville towards her. She also told him of her father, being in the king’s name, conveyed by soldiers to Paris, by which she was de-

prived of the only protection she had, by nature, a right to look up to.

“ I HAD formed,” said she, “ a plan
“ of escaping from the vale of Fabian,
“ and was in hopes of his assistance; but
“ now, that I have, by chance, found
“ a road into this vale, I throw my-
“ self on your charity and benevolence;
“ and trust to you directing me a way,
“ by which I may escape the dreaded
“ power of Baron Longuaville.”

“ I COULD readily conduct you out of
“ this place,” said he, “ but, where
“ would you then direct your steps, to
“ keep clear of your persecutor?”

“ O! I WOULD fly to Paris, and
“ throw myself at the feet of the king;
“ and, with my sighs and tears, move
“ him to grant me the privilege of at-

“ tending upon my dearest father, and
 “ soften his gloomy hours of imprison-
 “ ment and woe.”

“ I APPLAUD, my daughter, the filial
 “ piety, which actuates you to such a
 “ wish; but, as I view it, it appears
 “ pregnant with mischief to you.

“ If your suit should not be granted,
 “ which is most probable, you would
 “ then be in a worse situation than you
 “ are now; for, as the king only re-
 “ ceives petitions in public, your pre-
 “ sence at court would be a matter of
 “ notoriety, which would soon be known
 “ by Longuaville. Even if he should
 “ happen not to be present, your ap-
 “ pearance there would be reported to
 “ him, and you would then be more
 “ in his power, than you are now.”

“ My eagerness led me,” said she,
“ to look on one side the question only.
“ I will be governed by you, father.—
“ What would you advise me to?”

“ As you say, that Fabian and his
“ wife behave to you with kindness,
“ and that he has even gone so far as,
“ unsolicited, to say, that he would
“ protect you against Longuaville, my
“ advice is, that for the present, you
“ should remain at his cottage. But
“ as I think that his single arm, let his
“ inclination be as it may, is not suffi-
“ cient to protect you, if your persecu-
“ tor should come and demand you, I
“ would have you, on your return,
“ close up the opening into the road
“ under the mountain, in the same way
“ it was, before it was cleared of the
“ weeds and grass that stopped it,

“ which will prevent its being dis-
“ covered. If, then, there should be
“ any danger, which, from the nature
“ of the place where the cot is seated,
“ cannot come upon you so suddenly
“ but you must be warned of its ap-
“ proach, you may retreat through that
“ passage, and find an asylum here.
“ In the mean while, you may, per-
“ haps, find an opportunity, when Fa-
“ bian and his wife are busily em-
“ ployed, of stealing unobserved into
“ the subterraneous road, and of spend-
“ ing an hour here, when we may far-
“ ther consider upon the best methods
“ hereafter to be pursued.”

AFTER expressing her thanks to the hermit, and promising to be governed by his advice, she took her leave of him, and reached the cot of Fabian,

without her absence having been noticed by him, or his wife.

SHE contrived a method of closing up the mouth of the passage under the mountain, after she had entered it, as well as on the side in Fabian's valley, by which she could, without fear of a discovery, frequently visit the hermitage. This she generally did every morning and evening; and found great comfort and solace, both in reading, in which employment she passed much time, and in the conversation of the hermit, which was always fraught with instruction, without the austerity often attendant upon the mind of a man, who had secluded himself from the world. He was, in his discourse, even entertaining, as his former intercourse with mankind, had furnished him with nume-

rous anecdotes and tales of most of the public characters, that moved upon the stage of fashion, or of politics, in the capital of France, in which city, he had passed the greatest part of his life.

At a time that he was engaged with his visitors, of whom he had many, Matilda would take a book, and seat herself beneath a waving cypress, through whose thick foliage, the wind would whistle in hollow murmurs, the sable rooks above, cawing responsive to the melancholy sound. Or, she would ramble o'er the moss-grown bosom of the dale, till she reached the craggy banks of the rippling Sana, where she would stand to view, with wonder and amaze, the distant hills of ice and snow, whose hoary heads are capt with clouds; where vegetation's genial power has

lost its influence, the earth being bound in adamantine chains of never-ceasing frost.

THIS distant view of nature, in her rude and rugged dress, cheerless to the sight, with the gloomy, though not unpleasing scene in the valley near her, o'er which was cast an umbrageous shade, by the towering hills of rock around, and by the aspiring trees, whose lofty branches waved majestic to the western breeze, together with the plaintive notes of the little feathered melodists, that from the bushes warbled, served to create in her mind sensations of reverential pleasure.

IF, upon her return, she found the hermit still engaged, she departed for the straw-roofed cot of Fabian. But, if

she found the holy man alone, she generally remained with him, till the hour for the dinner, or the supper of the old couple drew near, as she knew she would not be missed by them before. This time she passed in useful and delightful conversation; and, when she parted from him, was always strongly urged to return, as soon as an opportunity presented itself. The venerable man had formed such an affectionate partiality for her, that he seemed, in her company, to have his youthful spirits renovated, and his mental vigour refreshed.

CHAPTER XI.

One morn I miss'd him on the custom'd hill,
 Along the heath and near his fav'rite tree:
 Nor yet beside the rill, 't
 Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he.

GRAY.

FATHER Philippe's advice was eagerly sought by all the country round. If any were afflicted with sorrow, they repaired to him to unburden their bosoms. If any were involved in difficulties, they came to him for counsel. To

the first, he administered all the comfort in his power ; to the latter, he gave the best advice he was capable of.— His character, for superior knowledge, was established very soon after his settling here, which he had never forfeited by his subsequent conduct, his counsel being always dictated by a sound understanding. His charity and philanthropy were best bespoke, by his numerous acts of benevolence to his many visitors, and his neighbours in general. His piety and religion were manifest, in his fervent devotion, in the midst of his crowded assembly, in his little chapel; and his resignation to the will of a superior being, shewed itself in the calmness and tranquillity, that ever reigned in his peaceful bosom.

ON Matilda's return, one day, from the

hermitage, as she approached the cottage of Fabian, she heard more voices than those of the old man and his wife. As she drew nearer, she plainly distinguished that of their son, who had been her forcible conductor from Villeroy Castle.

SHE stopped to listen to the conversation, when she heard the old soldier, with some warmth, say, "Whilst I have
 " an arm to use my sword, this cot,
 " humble as it is, shall never be by vil-
 " lany polluted. This arm, that oft has
 " been lifted, with executing venge-
 " ance, in defence of our liberty, and
 " our religion, has still vigour in it, old
 " as it is, to defend and protect help-
 " less innocence, from savage lustful
 " power!"

“ So sweet a creature too,” said Isabel, “ must she be subject to the
 “ brutal will of a cruel and relentless
 “ ravisher, and end her days in misery
 “ and woe? O, forbid it heaven!”

“ I KNOW not what to do,” said the son, “ The Baron, you know, has me in
 “ his power, and if I was now to attempt
 “ to counteract his schemes, I know his
 “ remorseless and revengeful temper to
 “ be such, that my life would answer
 “ for it. I would save the object of his
 “ pursuit, from his lawless grasp, but
 “ know not how, except at the risk of
 “ my life; therefore, he must take his
 “ own way.”

“ LET him beware of my sword, how-
 “ ever!” said Fabian.

MATILDA walked back from the cottage, to ruminate on the conversation she had just been witness to. She had no doubt, but that Baron Longuaville would, ere long, make his appearance in the valley; and, much as she felt herself indebted to Fabian, for his intentions of protection, she thought with Father Philippe, that they would be of no avail; that he would be overpowered with superior strength, and that she had no dependence to place on them. Her only reliance, therefore, must be on the secret passage, that would lead her to the hermitage, in case of his approach, which she now hourly expected.

TURNING her head, she saw Fabian and his son walking in close conversation; at length, the latter took his de-

parture, and she went towards the cottage. The old couple were unusually silent, and did not mention their son having been there. Matilda, who was naturally alive to every fear, was alarmed at their reserve; as she thought it might possibly arise, from his having succeeded, in convincing them, that it was necessary for his safety, that she should be given up to the Baron.

SHE was anxious for the time that she could fly to the counsel of Father Philippe, and inform him, of what she had heard, and of what she feared.

As soon as their frugal meal was over, she went to the passage, and entering it, was soon at the other side of the mountain, in sight of the hermitage. Father Philippe was not there: she went to

seek him among the bowers, but did not find him; she examined every rock, thinking that he might, as was sometimes his custom, have seated himself, with a book, upon one of them, enjoying the open air in his studies, but she was equally unsuccessful. She was grievously disappointed, as she wanted his assistance and advice, more than ever.

SHE sat in contemplative silence, on the jetting brow of a moss-spread rock, eagerly looking at the only approach to the valley, from the craggy banks of the transparent Sana, in hopes that she should see him advance. Her anxious eyes long watched in vain, and dusky night began to spread her purple mantle, before he returned.

SHE then recounted to him the conversation she had overheard, between the old couple and their son, and repeated her fear and anxiety, concerning the event.

FATHER Philippe, said, “ I cannot
 “ attempt to reason against the conviction of my mind, my daughter, and,
 “ therefore, do not endeavour to lull
 “ you into a false security, to make your
 “ present moments easy. That might
 “ be purchasing a fleeting peace of
 “ mind, at the expence of certain future
 “ misery. I think, as you do, that you
 “ may expect Baron Longuaville to
 “ come to the valley, before many days,
 “ nay, perhaps, before many hours
 “ elapse. If he is now at Paris waiting for the return of his messenger,
 “ it may be in the former time; but, if

“ he should have left that city, and
“ only sent the son of Fabian before
“ him, to prepare for his reception,
“ which I think most probable, then he
“ may be expected every approaching
“ hour. I can only, therefore, my love-
“ ly daughter, repeat the caution that
“ I before have given you, respecting
“ the secret subterraneous passage.—
“ Be careful that you are not watched
“ into it; be careful to conceal its en-
“ trance; and, upon the first appear-
“ ance of danger, fly to me. Longua-
“ ville will not dare to violate the her-
“ mitage, and there you may find a safe
“ asylum from his brutality. But,
“ should his savage villany, which well
“ I know, attempt to force the sacred
“ chapel, where it is my intention you
“ shall be concealed, I have still other
“ secret holds, known only to myself,

“ which not all the art of man can find;
 “ and there you may, at all events, rest
 “ in firm security. It now is getting
 “ late, and if you should prolong your
 “ stay, your absence may be noticed by
 “ Fabian or his wife. I would, there-
 “ fore, have you immediately to return,
 “ observing the caution I have so often
 “ mentioned, for on that depends our
 “ all. Heaven bless you, my daughter,
 “ good night!”

WISHING the reverend father a good
 night, she returned to the cottage of
 Fabian. The old couple still observed
 a studied silence, respecting the visit of
 their son that morning, and bed time
 arrived without his name being men-
 tioned.

THE room in which she slept, being divided from that of Fabian and his wife, by a thin partition only, the conversation in one, could be distinctly heard in the other. Some hours after they had retired to rest, Matilda had risen from her sleepless couch, and was sitting in her window, viewing the silver beams of the pale moon, playing upon the hoary towers of the old castle, whose bowing heads beetled o'er their base, with aspect terrible to those beneath, when her attention was attracted by low voices in the adjoining room.— She approached her side of the partition, and found that they proceeded from Fabian and his wife, who were in earnest discourse, and she soon found, that she was the subject of their conversation,

“ IT goes against my heart,” said Fabian.

“ BUT consider,” said Isabel, “ the
 “ reward; we may then leave this dull
 “ and recluse place, and live again with
 “ comfort in the world. Besides,
 “ should you still persist in attempting
 “ to protect her, our son may suffer an
 “ ignominious death, by being accused
 “ of the crimes he has been guilty of;
 “ to serve the Baron; whose oath in the
 “ court, would crush him; and, from
 “ the account we have of him, he
 “ minds an oath, ay and a false one
 “ too, no more than we do saying our
 “ prayers; heaven defend us! and not
 “ so only, but you might lose your own
 “ life in the scuffle, for it is not to be
 “ supposed the Baron will quietly, and
 “ without opposition, give up one, he

“ has taken so much trouble and pains
“ about.”

“ NOTWITHSTANDING all that,” said her husband, “ it goes against my heart; “ but there is no law against necessity, “ and I must yield.”

AFTER this, they were silent. Matilda was at no loss to guess the cause of the alteration in Fabian’s determination to protect her; which, from what fell from his wife, was the promise of a reward, for quietly giving her up to the Baron’s power.

“ WHAT baneful influence,” she cried to herself, “ has gold established “ in the world! What wonder-work- “ ing miracles it performs! It is a mas- “ ter key that fits every lock; the guilty

“ captive can release, and can place in
 “ bonds innocence and truth. It can
 “ turn the bias of a mind to integrity
 “ inclined, and dispose it to take the
 “ stamp of villany and fraud. Even,
 “ the boasted disinterestedness of Fa-
 “ bian, is not proof against it. That
 “ arm which had lifted his sword, to
 “ fall with vengeance on the foes of
 “ religion, and of liberty, dropped
 “ nerveless by his side, at the name of
 “ gold, and he no longer scrupled
 “ against religion’s laws, to deprive of
 “ liberty, unprotected innocence, that
 “ he had vowed to succour!!!”

MATILDA’S situation seemed now to
 be drawing towards a crisis. She could
 have no doubt of the determination of
 Fabian’s mind, after what she had

heard; and she expected every moment the Baron to approach. She now spent her time in dismal suspense. The old couple no longer paid that kind attention to her they had been wont to do; the times when they met being passed in sullen silence on their side, and in fruitless questions on her's, which seldom received an answer, particularly if they in any, even distant, way, alluded to the alteration in their conduct towards her.

SEVERAL days elapsed in this state of apprehension, and still the dreaded moment of the Baron's appearance did not arrive. She, therefore, supposed that he still remained at Paris, and waited for the return of his messenger that he had dispatched to negotiate

her ruin with old Fabian. If that was the case, as it seemed to her probable it was, she had, she thought, still a few days respite from his attempt; an attempt that she shuddered at, when it came across her mind, notwithstanding the plan Father Philippe had formed for her escape, from the snare that was laid for her. If that plan should fail, by Longuaville unexpectedly coming upon her, before she had time to put it in execution, her destruction was inevitable, as there was no possible way of avoiding the danger, by any other means. She had not now the attempt at protection from Fabian to depend upon, as that before, made a part of her scheme of escape. She never, indeed, relied upon effectual defence from his arm, after the opinion Father Philippe had

expressed; all she expected was, an opportunity of retiring to the passage under the mountain, during the bustle that any arrest to the Baron's purpose, even for a few minutes only, would cause. That hope was now at an end.

CHAPTER XII.

O sacred solitude! divine retreat!

YOUNG.

As soon as breakfast was over, she repaired to the hermitage, to inform the reverend recluse of the fresh trouble she was in, from the conversation of Fabian and his wife, and to take his comfortable counsel and advice. Just as she got into the valley, out of the subterraneous cut under the mountain, she saw

Father Philippe at a distance, winding round the jetting brow of a craggy cliff, that led to the Sana's rocky banks, and he was instantly out of sight.

SHE went into the hermitage, and waited there for his return, for some time, amusing herself with reading; after which, she walked out, into the shady vale, and took a long and winding path, lined on each side with cypress, and with yew, which meeting o'er her head, formed a darkened grove of dismalness and gloom. The rays of the resplendent sun, now vertical to the vale, which tipped with gold the pointed tops of the rocks, with moss o'erspread, and glistened with sparkling lustre in the crystal stream, were in this grove obscured by the close-growing branches, and closer-growing foliage, which caus-

ed an artificial darkness, that deceived the birds of night; the melodious nightingale warbling her plaintive notes, whilst the bats and owls were flitting round her, the flapping of leathern wings, and discordant shrieks, drowning the enchanting philomela's voice.

SHE had got so far into this walk of darkness, that she determined to go forward to the end of it. After proceeding farther along it, she was suddenly surprised by a flash of light, which instantly disappeared. Still going on, she found that it proceeded from a lamp, in the hand of an old woman, who, she could see through an aperture in a rock which she had now come up to, was paying attention to a person, lying stretched on a bed of sickness. Shortly after, she saw father Philippe enter with a flask

of wine in one hand, and some herbs in the other. After administering, himself, some of the cordial to the sick person, he gave the herbs to the woman, desiring her to extract the juice from them, and to give it to the invalid.

“ Forgive me, holy father,” said Matilda, “ for intruding on your privacy; “ it was chance, only, directed me this “ way. I came to open my heart to “ you, loaded with fresh trouble, and “ just as I entered the vale, seeing “ you turn towards the banks of the “ river, ‘I went into the hermitage, “ where I sat some time reading. I then “ walked out, when I fortuitously entered this dark and gloomy path, and “ was endeavouring to find my road out, “ when I passed this way.”

“ BE not concerned, my daughter,
 “ your presence is not unwelcome,”
 [said he; “ this is a spot, more secluded,
 “ and retired than any in the vale, and
 “ I made choice of it, upon my first
 “ fixing my abode here, for an infirma-
 “ ry, for the poor and houseless sick
 “ traveller.

“ THE man, whom you saw me with,
 “ who is now lying upon, I fear, a bed
 “ of death, has been under my care for
 “ a few days past. He was journeying
 “ near the vale, and being taken with
 “ extreme illness, he was directed to
 “ the hermitage. I brought him to this
 “ place, where I have an old woman
 “ constantly resident, whom I support,
 “ in return for her tending my sick pa-
 “ tients; and an attentive, good nurse
 “ she is.

“ WITH this man I was last night,
 “ whilst you so long waited for me.
 “ I knew him in Paris many years since,
 “ though he does not now know me. Be-
 “ lieving himself to be approaching fast
 “ to the verge of the grave, he was then
 “ confessing himself to me, and a scene
 “ of villany unexampled he has disco-
 “ vered;—but more of that hereafter.
 “ What new troubles have happened,
 “ and laid more heavy burdens on your
 “ already overloaded heart?”

MATILDA then informed him, of the
 discourse she had, in the night, overheard
 between old Fabian and his wife. He
 agreed with her, that it appeared, the
 old soldier was not proof against the
 gold of Longuaville, and that for a bribe
 he had consented to give her up.

“ But, be not dismayed, my daughter,” said he, “ though there is danger in the situation in which you are placed, recollect that there is a Being above, who keeps a watchful eye over innocence in distress, and who is as mercifully willing, as he is powerfully able, to dispense his succour, and his aid to the deserving, as he is awfully mighty in frustrating the pursuits of the wicked, and in hurling on their own heads, the destruction they meant for others, at a time they least expect it, or are the least prepared for it. That this will be the case, with the villain Longuaville, I have no doubt. Believe me, I feel assured, that the time is approaching.”

ALTHOUGH Matilda did not know any reason that Father Philippe had,

for what he now said, yet he spoke so emphatically, and appeared so unusually earnest, that it made an impression on her mind, that served to impart to it a serenity, and a calmness, that she had not felt before; and she returned to the cottage with a *presentiment* that all would yet be well. She suddenly, however, retracted that idea, when she thought of the situation of her father.

“How,” she exclaimed to herself,
 “can I be so unnaturally selfish, to
 “hope for the enjoyment of comfort,
 “when the dear author of my being,
 “lying in a damp dungeon, is deprived
 “of every solace, his dismal state so
 “loudly calls for? Can I look for com-
 “fort, when he is loaded with misery
 “and wretchedness? O, no! comfort
 “and I must ever -strangers be, till my

“ dear father can partake of the joy,
“ that may be offered to his daughter!”

IN the evening, as usual, she paid a visit to the hermit. She went into the parlour, and saw on the table implements of writing, but Father Philippe was not in the room. As she sat down near the table, she cast her eyes on the paper, and found the ink still wet; by which she knew he had not been long absent: she also saw the name of Baron Longuaville written on the same paper.

SHE was at a loss to conjecture in which way Baron Longuaville could employ the thoughts of the hermit, or to whom he could be writing, when

he had said, that he had bid the world adieu many years since; for, though she would not suffer herself to be led to commit a breach of hospitality, by exercising an impertinent curiosity, in reading the paper, or taking a nearer view of it, yet, she could see, even at the distance she was, that by its form, it was a letter, addressed to some particular person.

FATHER Philippe now entered, and put by the paper rather in a hurry, as if he was apprehensive of Matilda seeing more of it than he wished. He then invited her to accompany him to his hospital, as it was the time, at which he had told the nurse he should call, to see the sick man, and to make his observations on the operation of some me-

dicines he had prepared for him, which his enlarged knowledge had led him to cull out of the extensive vegetable creation.

THEY approached the infirmary, by another road, without going the length of the gloomy walk, Matilda had before passed through. They went round a high and pointed rock, whose head rivalled in height, the hill that the leaning towers of the castle stood on, whose hoary walls shook in awful grandeur to the passing gale. They then entered an opening on the opposite side of it, and were in the charitable receptacle of sickness, and of pain. Father Philippe, on his return from his patient's room, said, with a smile on his countenance, that the medicine had operated power-

fully, in assisting nature to expel the disorder, and he had strong hopes that the sick man would recover.

HE then led her back to the hermitage, and purple evening having begun to spread her shady wings, she took her leave of him.

WHEN she got back to the cottage, she found the son of Fabian again there. These frequent visits caused her great anxiety; the more so, on account of the reserve of the old couple respecting them, who had before been so loquacious. As to the son, he scarcely looked at her, and left the cottage soon after her entrance.

SHE was now convinced, that Baron

Longuaville would not, much longer, defer his appearance, and she determined to be more than usually watchful. She would not go to bed that night, but sat in her chair, by the wan light of the faintly lustrous moon, thinking of her forlorn and wretched situation, and that of her miserable father. She heard the sound of the distant watch-dog, whose hoarse bark reverberated from the valley's rocky sides, and ran echoing along its stony bottom. The wolves were howling, as they prowled in search of their midnight prey; the owl uttered her discordant notes; the bats flitted on their leathern pinions, and ever and anon against her window flew.

At length, the moon sunk behind

the western cliff, and left the vale in darkness, and in gloom. The clouds gathered, overcharged with vapours, which broke o'er the hills around, and ran in torrents down their steep descending sides in a deluge of rain.

A GENTLE knock was heard at the cottage door. Fabian put his head out of the window, and inquired who was there. Matilda heard the voice of his son; at the same time, she plainly could distinguish, that he was accompanied by another person, who, her fears told her, was Baron Longuaville. She kept still, not wishing it to be known that she had heard their approach, but remained on the watch, for fear of a surprise.

SHE continued listening, and soon

after heard the voice of the Baron, who, complaining of being very wet and cold, was requested to accept the bed of old Fabian and his wife, which he agreed to.

MATILDA continued the remainder of the night, forming schemes for eloping from the cottage, before the Baron should be stirring in the morning, that she might put herself under the care of Father Philippe at the hermitage, who was now her only hope, and her only trust.

BRIGHT Aurora now gently op'd the gates of day, streaking the Eastern sky with lines of light; Phœbus then mounted his fiery car, tinging the hills with his refulgent blaze, when she, in trembling anxiousness, left her

chamber. She got out of the cottage, as she supposed, unperceived. She did not go direct to the cavern's mouth, for fear of being watched, but made to the goat pen, where she found old Fabian, already at his daily work. To prevent suspicion of her design, she staid there a short time; and, as she had frequently done before, milked one of the goats, which she had some time back taken a fancy to, and had treated as a pet.—She could perceive the old man to look at her with more than common tenderness in his eyes, and turn his head; a sigh escaping at the same time from his bosom, which seemed to say in the language of the Poet,

“ My poverty, but not my will consents.”

SHE now left the pen, and taking a circuitous route, frequently, however,

looking behind her, to see that she was not observed by any person, had nearly reached the entrance of the passage under the mountain, when she perceived Isabel approaching her, who told her she came to call her to breakfast, which was waiting for her and Fabian.

“FABIAN is at the goat-pen,” said Matilda; in hopes that she should, by sending the old woman there for him, gain time to get off unperceived. But she contented herself with calling her husband, who answering to her voice, Isabel departed for the cottage, desiring Matilda not to be long after her.

THIS was the time, or never, to put her plan into execution. She looked

round her, and not seeing any body, she flew towards the spot, and reached the opening of the passage: she removed the dead leaves and moss, that concealed it from the sight, and was soon out of Fabian's valley.

CHAPTER XIII.

Had you not by wond'rous fortune come!

SHAKESPEAR.

HAVING entered the mouth of the road under the mountain, she closed it up again, as she had been accustomed to do heretofore. She now congratulated herself, upon her escape from the

lawless power of Baron Longuaville, and proceeded towards Father Philippe's vale.

SHE had not gone far along the passage, before she heard a noise, which appeared to be following her; and soon after, plainly distinguished the echo of footsteps. She fled with all the speed she could, but found that her pursuer gained upon her. When she got into the vale, she ventured to look behind her, and saw the Baron at no great distance, who had, unperceived by her, watched her into the cave. She shrieked, involuntarily, with alarm and fright, which reaching the ears of Father Philippe, he came up to her, just as Longuaville had overtaken her, and had seized her by the arm.

“ HOLD!” said the reverend hermit;
 “ I cannot suffer any violence to be
 “ made use of to the person of this fair
 “ one, whose protector I am; and
 “ whom, I will protect.”

HE then led her into the hermitage,
 and was followed by the Baron, who,
 he found, was not inclined quietly to
 forego his intentions, of forcing Matilda
 from him.

HE succeeded in reaching the chapel,
 when he said, “ Dare not to violate
 “ these consecrated walls, within which
 “ holy sanctuary, I place the injured
 “ object of your villanous lust.”

“ Nor consecrated walls, or holy
 “ sanctuaries,” said the Baron, “ shall
 “ prevent me. Therefore, deliver her

“ up to my just demand; or, by the
 “ holy Virgin, my sword shall force
 “ a passage to her through your
 “ heart.”

“ I DESPISE your threats, as much
 “ as I abhor the villain who utters
 “ them,” said the hermit; “ and, ra-
 “ ther than be false to my promise of
 “ protection, I would lose the last drop
 “ that beats with quick pulsation there,
 “ in defence of that abused fair one.”

THE Baron made an attempt to get past Father Philippe, who stood with his back to the chapel door, and prevented him. He then drew his sword, and made a push, that if it had not been parried with a staff the hermit generally walked with, would, in all probability, have closed his life. A scuffle now en-

sued, in which the Baron had his sword beat out of his hand by a blow from his adversary; but quickly regaining it from the floor, he plunged it in the old man's body, who fell to the ground, where he lay weltering in his blood.

LONGUAVILLE now opened the door, to drag the innocent Matilda from her sanctuary, but was astonished and disappointed, when he could not find her there. During the scuffle, she had made her escape out of a private door, that led through the sacristy, into the parlour, and had from thence got into the vale.

THE Baron knew she could not be far, and issued out in search of her. He saw her, as she was turning round a

craggy rock, and was quickly up with her.

“ HA ! my pretty runaway,” said he,
 “ have I at last caught you? Not all
 “ the power of heaven and earth con-
 “ joined, again shall force you from my
 “ possession, or deliver you from my
 “ hands.” Saying which, he seized
 her by the arm, and dragged her to-
 wards the passage that led to the vale
 of Fabian.

“ OH ! mercy, mercy ; help, for hea-
 “ ven’s sake !”

THE Baron minded not her cries, but
 proceeded, with brutal force, towards
 the bottom of the mountain, Matilda
 still crying out for mercy. They had
 nearly reached the opening of the cave,

when Longuaville's attention was attracted by the sight of a stranger, who was sliding down the almost perpendicular descent from the old castle, with a swiftness that mocked the sight; and in an instant he was in the valley, when he cried out, "Ruffian, villain! unhand that injured fair one, or feel from my arm, the vengeance due to your brutality."

THE Baron did not wait to expostulate; but, his sword remaining drawn in his hand since he had had the scuffle with Father Philippe, attacked the stranger, before he well had time to put himself on his defence, and had nearly overpowered him.

MATILDA, who had turned from the

sight of the naked swords, now thought of making another attempt at an escape; and, was passing the combatants, with that intent, when casting her eyes on them, she suddenly exclaimed, “ O, heaven, Dumain!” and fell senseless on the earth.

“ DUMAIN!” repeated the Baron, with a tremulous voice; he continuing engaged with his adversary, who now appeared to have the better of the combat, and soon after laid Longuaville at his feet, covered with blood.

DUMAIN’s attention was now called to Matilda, and he succeeded in bringing her to herself. He then led her back to the hermitage, where they found Father Philippe upon a couch in the parlour.

HE lay some time, he informed them, in a state of insensibility, after he had received the wound from Baron Longuaville. When he recovered his recollection, he found from the quantity which lay upon the ground near him, that he had lost a large portion of blood, which was the cause of his fainting. At the same time, by his skill in surgery, he was convinced that no vital part had been touched, and that there was no danger to be apprehended, from the hurt he had received.

“HEAVEN be praised for it!” said Matilda.

FATHER Philippe then inquired, how she had escaped out of the Baron’s power, and was informed, by Dumain, that

he had fallen under his arm, and then lay in the valley.

“BEFORE I ask any more questions,” said the hermit, “it is incumbent on us
 “to act a Christian’s part, and to take
 “care of his wounds. I therefore re-
 “quest,” addressing himself to Du-
 main, “that you will return, and see if
 “he is still in the same state, in which
 “you left him; and if so, that you will
 “lose no time in going to Fribourg for
 “a surgeon, as I am not able now to at-
 “tend him myself.”

DUMAIN immediately left the hermitage, and went towards the part of the valley, where he had met with the Baron. Just as he came in sight of the spot, he saw a man leading him into the cavern,

to take him to the cottage of Fabian, whose son had come in search of him, thinking his absence so long, that it must be occasioned by some accident, when he found him lying on the ground, with his sword by him, at the mouth of the subterraneous passage.

DURING Dumain's absence, Father Philippe had learned from Matilda who he was; but had still to learn, by what accident, or through what cause it happened, that he was so fortunately at hand, to afford her the assistance that she, at that critical moment, stood so much in need of. He was obliged, however, for the present, to restrain his desire of information on that head, on account of the necessity he felt there was, for having his wound dressed, and of keeping himself, for some time, in a state of quiet-

ness, upon which, very much depended his recovery.

MATILDA watched by him, with the most anxious solicitude, and attended him with the most regardful care, in which she was assisted by the attention of Dumain. They had the satisfaction to find, that their assiduities were crowned with the wished success, as Father Philippe recovered fast.

DUMAIN one morning left the vale, to endeavour to obtain some information respecting the state of Baron Longuaville; and, upon his return, informed the hermit and Matilda, that he had learned, he was conveyed to an inn, in the neighbourhood of Fabian's valley, where he lay for some days, and was then carried in a litter from thence. He

was sorry to learn, he said, at the same time, that his wounds were of the most dangerous nature; notwithstanding, he insisted upon being taken immediately to Paris.

FATHER Philippe was now so far recovered, that Matilda and Dumain could sometimes leave him alone, when they walked out, and wandered o'er the variegated vale. Now, o'er a barren rocky surface, with nought of vegetation's cheerful power, but the russet creeping moss, from the midst of which, rose a stupendous cliff, whose aspiring head o'ertopped the lofty trees around. Now, through a path of narrow space, among the bowery cedars, whose grand and branching tops, meeting o'er their heads, sheltered them from the scorching heat of the mid-day

sun. Then, they would stray along the margin of a rippling streamlet, till they reached the cooling verge of the flowing Sana.

HERE they often sat, and talked of times and circumstances past, which would recal to their minds, days of happiness and bliss, now fled from their grasp, and they feared never more to come within their reach. The cottage of Le Pui, in times of innocence and peace, had charms they did not again expect to partake of; charms for ever gone, for ever lost, the remembrance of which only added to their melancholy.

SOMETIMES, they would sit in pensive silent sorrow, Matilda thinking of the wretched state of her father, and Du-

main of his own wayward fate, that prevented him following the dictates of his heart. The solitude of the vale, with the darkened, shady scene around, served to add force to the gloom that had taken possession of their minds. They walked, or sat, in responsive sadness sighing, the tears often tracing each other, in crystal drops, down Matilda's lovely cheek, till her heaving bosom was convulsed with sobs.

THOUGH Matilda always felt a pleasure in the company of Dumain, the many troubles she had experienced, and the load of grief that weighed down her mind, on her father's account, were so great an alloy to it, that now she could not rally her spirits, even when he was present; and Dumain, from whom before, all ills fled in the loved society

of the adored object of his affections, was now cast down, spiritless, and depressed, to see her in that dejected state.

“ WOULD I could ease that tender breast!” said he, “ My life should pay the willing price; and, in the agonies of approaching death, I should think myself a gainer by the bargain. What can I do to mitigate your anguish?”

“ ALAS! Dumain,” said she, “ it is not within the scope of your power, however willing, and however anxious you may be. Whilst my father, my revered, and ever dear father, remains in the wretched situation he now is, this breast can never know a moment’s peace. The uncer-

“ tainty of his fate, and even the want
 “ of knowledge of the crime for which
 “ he is imprisoned, are circumstances,
 “ that cannot but add to the load of
 “ grief I have, on his account, to sus-
 “ tain. O, that I could be admitted a
 “ willing prisoner in his gloomy dun-
 “ geon, to watch and tend upon him
 “ in his dismal state! Or, if that be
 “ impossible, that I could but be near
 “ him, and sometimes hear from him,
 “ and learn that he is in health! I
 “ might, perhaps, learn too, that there
 “ was likely soon to be a period to his
 “ confinement.”

“ I WILL go,” said Dumain, “ and
 “ endeavour to obtain the information
 “ you are in want of; and happy shall
 “ I be, if the account I shall be able to

“ bring you, will ease the torture of
 “ your mind.”

“ I THANK you,” said Matilda;
 “ now that I have no fear from Baron
 “ Longuaville, I mean to go to Paris:
 “ perhaps, I may be able to gain admis-
 “ sion to his dungeon, and render him
 “ the comfort and the solace, a child’s
 “ attention, only can bestow.”

MATILDA accepted the offer of Du-
 main to conduct her there, with which,
 on their return to the hermitage, they
 acquainted Father Philippe.

“ As Baron Longuaville is not in a
 “ situation at present to trouble you,
 “ my daughter,” said he, “ I approve
 “ your resolution of visiting the capital

“ of France ; but not of your intention
 “ of petitioning the king, as I know it
 “ would be fruitless ; and, as it must be
 “ a public matter, it would come to
 “ the ears of Baron Longuaville, by
 “ which he would know you was in
 “ Paris. It may be true, that he can-
 “ not, at present, himself in person mo-
 “ lest you ; but he may employ others
 “ to do it ; and you must recollect, that
 “ he has now an additional motive to
 “ have your person in his power, name-
 “ ly, to prevent your disclosing the late
 “ outrage practised on you, in for-
 “ cibly conveying you from Villeroy
 “ Castle.”

DUMAINE, seeing the matter in exact-
 ly the same light as the hermit, expres-
 sed himself to the same effect, and
 Matilda gave up the idea of presenting

a petition to the king, but determined upon taking lodgings as near to the place of her father's confinement as possible, if she could learn where that was, that she might be at hand, if she should succeed in obtaining any intercourse with him.

CHAPTER XIV.

..... The story of my life;

 Even from my boyish days,
 To the very moment that he bade me tell it.

SHAKESPEAR.

FATHER Philippe had now so far regained his strength, as to be able to move about, and to go out into his little garden; but Matilda did not think, that he was sufficiently recovered to be left.-- Much as she longed to be in Paris, she

could not suffer her inclination to overcome her gratitude; she, therefore, determined to remain at the hermitage for a short time longer, till he was so perfectly reinstated in his health, as to be able to do for himself, many little offices, that he was now under the necessity of being assisted in.

DURING their protracted stay, Father Philippe requested Dumain would inform him, to what fortunate circumstance it was owing, that he had arrived in the valley at the time he did, to rescue Matilda from the hands of her brutal ravisher. He had before, acquainted her with the cause, he, therefore, took an opportunity, when she was absent from the hermitage, walking through the solitary vale, or sitting reclined on a mossy bank with her book, to give to

the hermit an account of the cause that brought him there, just at that time; and, at the further request of Father Philippe, a narrative of his past life, from the earliest years of his knowledge of it.

“ WHERE I was born I know not,” said he; “ I have often asked my father, “ but could never get from him an answer that solved my question; he always turning the discourse to some other subject. His name is Dumain, and he has lived, for many years, in the vale Le Pui, in the province of Languedoc. The period of our first fixing there, I well remember, although I do not, in the most remote degree, from whence we moved. A circumstance, that happened immediately after our arrival there, has served to

“ imprint upon my mind a strong re-
“ collection of the time; which was,
“ three successive fires that happened
“ at the Castle of Saint Aubyn, which
“ was then repairing, by the Marquiss’s
“ order, he intending to make it, in fu-
“ ture, the place of his usual residence.

“ My father, has ever lived in a small
“ cottage, in a retired manner, and
“ very frugal. Although, in every
“ other respect, he has always behaved
“ to me with the greatest apathy, not
“ ever, in my childish years, bestowing
“ on me any caresses, or endearing
“ words, yet he gave me the best educa-
“ tion the part of the country we lived
“ in afforded.

“ As I approached towards the age
“ of man, he always was very particular

“ about what female acquaintance I
“ made, afraid that I should form some
“ connection in life, of which he would
“ have reason to disapprove. On that
“ account, as he said, he exacted a
“ solemn oath from me, that I never
“ would marry any woman, without I
“ had his previous consent. That oath
“ has cost me more subsequent pain, than
“ can readily be conceived: it is owing to
“ that oath, which I look upon as taken
“ in the face of the Almighty, and
“ which no personal consideration shall
“ ever cause me to violate—it is owing,
“ I say, to that oath, that I have suffer-
“ ed the torments of a wounded mind,
“ labouring under the burden of suppres-
“ sed love, which has caused my health
“ to flee from me, and which, I have,
“ in vain, rambled from place to place
“ to regain; trying, without effect, the

“ varied scene, and varied air; still as
 “ I pursue it flies.

“ I first became acquainted with Ma-
 “ tilda and her father, through a cir-
 “ cumstance that happened, in which
 “ I was fortunate enough to be of sin-
 “ gular service to the latter, in rescuing
 “ him from the swords of assassins.—
 “ He was wounded, and his own resi-
 “ dence, being at too great a distance
 “ for him to be taken to, in his then
 “ state, I conveyed him to our cot-
 “ tage, where he lay, in a dangerous
 “ condition, for some time, his daughter
 “ Matilda, attending upon him, with
 “ all that dutiful and affectionate zeal,
 “ she so eminently possesses.

“ From that time, happiness has
 “ been a stranger to my breast, except

“ the transient gleams I have enjoyed,
 “ when in the ever-valued presence of
 “ the adorable object of my love. It
 “ was now for the first time, that I re-
 “ pented of the sacred oath I had taken,
 “ as my father refused to give his con-
 “ sent for me to address Matilda, as one
 “ whom I wished to make my wife.—
 “ This had such an effect on my ge-
 “ neral habit, that I was first, attacked
 “ by a melancholy lowness of spirits,
 “ which all my efforts could not con-
 “ quer; and, afterwards, by a violent
 “ fever, from which I was with diffi-
 “ culty recovered; but have, never yet,
 “ been restored to that state of health,
 “ I before enjoyed.”

HE then recounted many anecdotes
 of Matilda's excellent disposition, which
 he had an opportunity of witnessing,

during his confinement at the cottage of Montfort, after the bruises he received, in the recovery of her favourite bullfinch; all of which, he dwelt on with peculiar pleasure.

“ WHEN I was sufficiently recovered, to undertake a journey,” he continued, “ I forced myself from the lovely, but forbidden object of my affections, and went to different places, in hopes that change of air, and change of scene, would work a cure in my health; in my mind, I felt that nothing could. After travelling about some time, to no purpose, I was advised to try the air of Montpelier.— I remained there a space of time, long enough to give it a fair chance, as well as to profit by the skill of the physicians, if their skill could be of

“ service to me ; but still, I did not find
 “ the wished-for benefit.”

HE mentioned then, that he was advised to take a sea voyage ; and that, in consequence of that advice, he went to Italy, and from thence to Sicily, where he so unexpectedly met with the Countess Villeroy and Matilda. Also, of his accompanying them home to Villeroy Castle ; where, he left Matilda, and returned to his father’s in the vale Le Pui, having first spent some time at Montpellier, with some friends he had there.

THEN pursuing his narrative, he said,
 “ The day after I got home, I went to
 “ the cottage of Montfort, and was
 “ astonished, when I was informed,
 “ that he had been conveyed, under a

“ guard, a prisoner to Paris, and, that his
 “ daughter was gone again to Villeroy
 “ castle, from whence, I understood, she
 “ was lately returned. Knowing the
 “ trouble she would be in, on her fa-
 “ ther’s account, I flew after her, to
 “ offer my services, if I could in any
 “ way, be instrumental, in assisting ei-
 “ ther of them in their distress.

“ Upon my arrival, I was shocked to
 “ find that the Countess was dead, and
 “ had been buried but the day before.
 “ I then inquired for Matilda, and was
 “ given to understand, that she had
 “ walked out into the wood, full of sor-
 “ row, and of melancholy, at the recent
 “ loss they had all sustained. I went,
 “ in expectation of meeting her, when,
 “ what my astonishment, and my grief
 “ were, you may have some conception

“ of, when I tell you I saw her, in the
 “ midst of screams and struggles, forced
 “ into a carriage, which, before I could
 “ reach the spot, drove off at full
 “ speed.

“ I followed it with my eyes, as long
 “ as it remained in sight; I then went
 “ back to the castle, and mounting my
 “ horse, set out in pursuit. I traced it
 “ along the road, till I came to the
 “ banks of the Rhone, where I was
 “ informed a barge had been some
 “ days in waiting, and had pushed off
 “ into the stream that morning, the in-
 “ stant it had received some passengers
 “ from a carriage, one of whom was a
 “ female.

“ I DID not doubt but these were Ma-
 “ tilda, and her brutal conductors. I

“ accordingly engaged a swift-sailing
 “ boat, to follow them up the river,
 “ which was the course they took. My
 “ boat cut rapidly through the dividing
 “ stream; the boatmen plied their oars
 “ with energetic arm, and at last,
 “ brought me in sight of the longed-for
 “ object.

“ I FOLLOWED it across the lake of
 “ Geneva, and saw the passengers land
 “ on the opposite shore. I saw them en-
 “ ter Lausanne, and there I lost them. I
 “ understood that they took a carri-
 “ age from thence, but my utmost di-
 “ ligence could not procure informa-
 “ tion of the route they afterwards pur-
 “ sued.

“ I left Lausanne, and turned my
 “ horse’s head towards Berne, in hopes

“ that I should hear something of them
“ upon that road. I soon found that
“ they had not passed that way. I then
“ turned back, and after travelling a
“ considerable distance, upon, as I af-
“ terwards learned, false information, I
“ found myself, at the foot of Mount
“ Pilate, and, was then convinced, that
“ I must have been misled.

“ I WAS now at a distance from any
“ habitable place, and the sable wings
“ of night spread fast o’er the twilight
“ of departed day, casting a pitchy
“ darkness all around. I was in a
“ strange country, and dare scarcely
“ move for fear of hidden pits, and un-
“ known bogs, with which I might be
“ surrounded. I continued in this si-
“ tuation, till night had reached its
“ utmost bound. I heard the dis-

“ tant clock strike twelve, the watch-
“ dogs were upon their guard, barking
“ their larums, with loud and hoarse
“ discordance, which were answered
“ by the dreadful howl of the prowling
“ wolf, and the surly growl of the sa-
“ vage bear. I expected every moment
“ to become a prey to their fierce and
“ rapacious hunger.

“ AFTER spending some hours in this
“ state of apprehension, I saw at a dis-
“ tance, a feeble light, as if from a
“ small lamp. I made up to it, with
“ cautious steps, fearful where I set
“ my foot, and found it proceeded from
“ a low-roofed cottage, the inhabitant of
“ which was a carrier, and had just risen
“ to prepare his horses to commence
“ their daily labour, as soon as morning
“ dawn should peep through the ori-

“ ent sky, and send to their hidden
 “ dens and fastnesses, the prowling
 “ beasts of prey, and render the roads
 “ safe for the journeying traveller to
 “ pass along.

“ I ENTERED his cottage, and learn-
 “ ing that his route lay towards Fri-
 “ bourg, I determined to accompany
 “ him. I arrived there a day or two since,
 “ and, from the inquiries that I made,
 “ I found that a carriage had, about the
 “ time that I traced Matilda as far as
 “ Lausanne, stopped at the edge of
 “ the town, where some persons alight-
 “ ed. The description of the female,
 “ answering exactly to her of whom I
 “ was in such anxious pursuit, I did not
 “ doubt but that she was concealed
 “ somewhere in this neighbourhood.

“ I WAS informed of the philanthro-
“ py and benevolence of a reverend re-
“ cluse, that resided hereabouts, and
“ was determined to find him out,
“ and request his advice, after laying
“ before him the state of the dilem-
“ ma, and the trouble I was in. To
“ seek you out, Father, for that pur-
“ pose, I left Fribourg, and mount-
“ ing the hill, where are the ruins of
“ an old castle, to view the country
“ round; I saw a female, whom my
“ sympathizing soul instantly told me
“ was Matilda, struggling with a man,
“ who was forcibly dragging her along.
“ I did not hesitate, but slid down
“ the steep descent, and arrived in
“ time, to save the dear one from de-
“ struction.”

CHAPTER XV.

Thrice happy they, who sleep in humble life,
Beneath the storm ambition blows!

YOUNG.

JUST as Dumain had concluded his narrative, Matilda returned into the hermitage, and prevented Father Philippe making some observations, that he was upon the point of doing.

HIS health was now so far re-estab-

lished, that he could walk out, as he had been accustomed formerly to do. One of the first places he visited, was his hospital; on his return, he informed Matilda, that his patient was nearly recovered from his sickness, whose intention it was, to be in Paris, before a long time elapsed.

THE hermit now every day grew stronger, and soon attained in such a state, that Matilda and Dumain thought of bidding him adieu. They fixed upon a day, at no great distance, for their departure, which the former looked forward to, with an anxious, trembling heart.

IN the mean while, Father Philippe passed a great part of his time with his convalescent patient, in the infirmary;

and during the time he was in the hermitage, he was busily employed in writing. Dumain had several times expressed a wish to visit his patient, along with him, but he had always framed some excuse to lead him another way, and he had hinted to Matilda, that he wished she would not discover the intricate road to it; a wish, she of course complied with.

WHEN he accompanied them from the hermitage into the valley, to enjoy the fanning breeze, that breathed in gentle zephyrs, through the shady branches of the lofty, thick-growing wood, that spread in an umbrageous screen, obscuring the burning rays of the parching sun, he always avoided the road to the gloomy path, into which Matilda had by chance been led.

HE once conducted them up a winding ascent, which brought them to the magnificent ruins of the castle, which Matilda had frequently, at a distance, viewed with awe and admiration. They rambled through the many vaults, whose roofs were hung with furred damp, and up the narrow stairs, that led them to the turrets' tops, from whence they saw the country round, till the horizon was bounded by the cloud-capt hills of ice and snow; beneath, and on the towering sides of which, in one place, the farmers were committing to the fruitful earth, the springtide vegetative seed; whilst, at the same time, in another, the harvestmen were gathering their autumnal crop. Their frozen heads, a scene of winter to the sight presented; and, as they downward cast their eyes, they

saw in the warmth of the valley's depth, the cheering verdure of the smiling summer's growth.

THE day was now approaching fast, on which they had determined to bid the hospitable hermit adieu. As the time drew near, Matilda's anxiety increased, and it required all the exercise of Father Philippe's grave advice, and all the energy of Dumain's attention, to prevent her from sinking under the load, that pressed so heavy on her heart. She strove, but strove in vain; all her exertion was barely sufficient to preserve her strength to undertake the journey.

WHEN the day arrived, on which they were to depart, Father Philippe put a packet into the hands of Dumain,

and requested him to deliver it on his arrival in Paris, without delay, to the Marquis de Chalons, to whom it was addressed. Dumain took it, and promised, that no time should be unnecessarily lost, before it found its way into the hands of him, to whom it was directed.

“ I HOPE, my lovely daughter,” said the reverend hermit, “ that you will not
 “ be again molested by that villain
 “ Longuaville. It will, however, be
 “ adviseable for you to be circumspect
 “ in your appearance in Paris, for the
 “ same reason I have before given you.
 “ I have that opinion of your excellent
 “ heart, and of your understanding,
 “ that, I am convinced, you will not
 “ think impertinent, this caution; which,
 “ as you are unfortunately deprived of

“ your father’s advice, I think it my
 “ duty to offer to your attention.

“ UNTIL you have again the blessing
 “ of his protection, be careful in your
 “ choice of the company you may be
 “ obliged to mix with. You may,
 “ probably, find many who will, for
 “ sinister ends, flatter you, in hopes of
 “ pleasing your vanity, that they may
 “ the more easily lead you into ruin.—
 “ Avoid flattery, as you would shun a
 “ pestilence. It is a species of deceit;
 “ it is a fraud, practised upon the pas-
 “ sions; and, never proceeds from a
 “ bosom, where honesty has taken deep
 “ its root, nor, is ever received with
 “ pleasure, but by the weak and imbe-
 “ cile of mind: a strong understanding
 “ will ever rise superior to it. I say so

“ much against flattery, to put you
 “ on your guard against false friends,
 “ by trusting whom, you may be led
 “ into fresh danger, and, possibly, may
 “ again be delivered into the power of
 “ your relentless persecutor.

“ I hope, my dear child, that you will
 “ soon find the clouds of gloom and me-
 “ lancholy disperse, with which you
 “ have been so long enveloped; and,
 “ that they will leave you, surrounded
 “ by the sunshine of happiness, which
 “ your affectionate duty to your father,
 “ and your many, very many other men-
 “ tal endowments, render you so emi-
 “ nently deserving of.

FATHER Philippe then gave her his
 blessing, and taking a tender leave of

her, as well as of Dumain, they proceeded by the road he directed them, out of the valley towards Fribourg, and he returned to the hermitage.

As they receded from the solitary vale, and left its solemn gloomy shade, they got into an open country, where vegetation had put on her gayest dress, and was a cheering contrast to the scene they had left. There, the interwoven branches of the close-growing trees, made almost a constant artificial night, the birds of darkness flitting about the lurid space, shrieking their discordant notes, that jared upon the offended ear. Here, the sun's unobstructed rays, gilded the variegated bosom of the earth, lending his genial aid to the production of fruits and herbs,

and imparting to the breast of man, a grateful adoration of his all-powerful influence.

THEY procured a *cabriolet*, and set off on their journey towards Paris. After they had passed through Franche Comté and Champagne, they stopped a night at Langres.

As they alighted, Matilda saw a person that she thought she had some recollection of. As he approached, she instantly recognised him to be Filesac, who had delivered her from the hands of Baron Longuaville, the last time she was at Paris.

HE informed her, the Baron was so exasperated against him, when he found

that she had made her escape, that, if he had not been disarmed, he would have instantly revenged himself upon the life of her defender, for the disappointment. As it was, he could only vent his rage in curses and imprecations, blasphemous and horrible.

“ I KEPT him,” he continued, “ till
 “ morning, when, I had no doubt, you
 “ would take care to be out of his reach.
 “ I then told him, that I would for
 “ ever bid adieu to him, and his vil-
 “ lany; and, leaving him, I have not
 “ seen him since.”

MATILDA informed him, how he had again succeeded in getting her into his power; how she had been forcibly conveyed from Villeroy Castle, into the

vale, where Fabian's cottage stood ; and, of the subsequent arrival of the Baron ; with her wonderful rescue by Dumain.

“ DUMAIN ! ” said Filesac, turning himself towards the companion of Matilda, “ are you the son of old Dumain, “ in the vale Le Pui ? ”

BEING answered in the affirmative, he seemed surprised ; and walked about the room for some time, in a thoughtful mood.

“ Do you know my father ? ” said Dumain.

“ I DID know him ; but I have not “ seen him for many years. Is he living “ still ? ”

“ HE was when I was at home, and
“ I hope he is now.”

THEY saw no more of Filesac, who set off in the morning, before day break. They got into the *cabriolet* at an early hour, and pursued their journey towards Paris.

IN the evening, they approached a hamlet, where the bells of the church were merrily ringing. At a distance on the green, they saw assembled a group of gay villagers, tripping on the light fantastic toe down the mazy dance. Upon inquiring the distance of the next post town, they understood it was so far, that it would not be possible to reach it in any reasonable time; and being told, that they might have ac-

commodations there, they determined to remain at the hamlet for that night.

THEY were informed, that this rustic merriment was on account of a wedding that had that day been solemnized; and that the bride and bridegroom gave a treat upon the occasion.

THEY invited Matilda and Dumain to partake of their feast. The former would not damp their innocent mirth, by declining the invitation, although her mind was ill-suited, at that time, for the enjoyment of pleasure. She accepted of their rustic civility, and mixed in conversation with them, but excused herself from dancing, by saying, she was too much fatigued with her long day's journey.

THEY kept up their festivity to a late hour. They then retired, in innocence and peace, each swain leading his ruddy-cheeked partner to her rural cot.

MATILDA and Dumain left the hamlet the next morning. As they passed the green, where they had witnessed the happy villagers in the full enjoyment of their pleasure, and their mirth, Matilda said, “ I could not avoid thinking, last night, when I saw health and content beaming in the countenances of the rustic throng, that they enjoy more real satisfaction, than any other class of mortals, let their station be what it may.”

“ THIS is the happiest class of human life,” said Dumain; “ they are

“ content in their station, nor wish for
 “ more than they have within their
 “ grasp. Content creates independ-
 “ ence of mind, which is one of the
 “ greatest blessings enjoyed by man.
 “ Without independence, what are all
 “ the riches of the world! The man
 “ whose coffers o’errun with gold, and
 “ hath not independence, is poor as the
 “ vagrant, houseless wretch, that on the
 “ eleemosynary gifts of humane pass-
 “ engers subsists; whilst the cottager,
 “ humble though his life may be, pos-
 “ sessed of independence, is rich upon
 “ the scanty wages he daily by his la-
 “ bour earns. The proud possessor-
 “ of far-extended lands, o’er which he
 “ lordly roams with lofty haughtiness,
 “ without independence, is poorer far,
 “ than the lowly labourer, on whom he
 “ will not deign to cast his eye.

“ **CONTENT** and Independence are
“ inseparable companions; they go
“ hand in hand with blooming health,
“ and tranquil temperance, scions of
“ the same parent stock. How much
“ more healthy are the humble dwell-
“ ers of the mud-walled cot, whose
“ viands are by exercise seasoned, and
“ receive a zest from pure salubrious
“ air, than the luxurious inhabitants of
“ crowded towns and cities! The latter
“ spend in revelry, and in the false and
“ fleeting joys by wine obtained, the
“ hours by nature meant for rest: their
“ weak-toned, languid stomachs loathe
“ all wholesome food, searching the
“ ocean’s unseen depth, to please their
“ sickly palate; or sending to the west-
“ ern clime, for monsters to devour,
“ which, drowned in the prostituted
“ juice of the delicious grape, with

" fiery Indian powder added, force
 " with impetuous fury through the heat-
 " ed veins the burning blood, which in-
 " creases, till a rabid fever hurries them
 " into premature infirmity, if not to
 " death; and they entail upon their pos-
 " terity ills that make life a burden.
 " Not so the poor, but happy cottager;
 " his coarse and frugal meals add
 " strength to his robust frame, and
 " lengthen out a life of rational enjoy-
 " ment, till he quietly drops, at last, in
 " the extreme of old age, not a fear-
 " ful, because not a guilty tenant, into
 " the peaceful grave; leaving behind
 " him a healthful progeny, to walk
 " in the steps that he had trod be-
 " fore!"

TOWARDS the close of that evening,
 they reached the gates of Paris. Ma-

tilda's heart sunk within her, as they passed along the streets, to that quarter of the city, in which she had concluded to take up her residence. Dumain engaged lodgings for her, in a situation convenient for the purpose she had in view, of which she took possession that night. He left her, promising that he would, the next morning, commence the necessary inquiries about the unfortunate Montfort.

END OF VOL. III.



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